Visions of the Future in the Science Fiction of H. G. Wells

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Abstract

In contrast to the radical transformation from utopia to dystopia in visionary literature of the twentieth century, the fiction of H. G. Wells progresses from dystopia to utopia. This atypical progression in Wells's fiction merits careful analysis in the context of the intellectual ambiance and the genre of utopian literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This thesis discusses Wells's most prominent science fiction from 1895 to 1905 – *The Time Machine* (1895), *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899) and *A Modern Utopia* (1905) – with respect to the development of science and technology at the end of the century and the author's own career and life.

This thesis argues that although Wells's novels do indeed progress from dystopian to utopian visions, a persistent ambivalence and skepticism equally characterize these works. In his early dystopian science fiction, Wells shows his skepticism toward the modern belief in science and progress, an element that never completely disappears in his later utopian works but rather recedes into the background. The general progression from dystopia to utopia, as well as the underlying ambivalence in these futurist visions, stems from a number of possible sources, such as crises in Wells's personal life, his socialist beliefs, and the role as artist-educator that he adopts in his middle to later writings.

In the Conclusion this thesis attempts to set Wells's fiction in the larger critical discussion of modernity and post-modernity as articulated by contemporary Italian philosopher Gianni Vattimo, whose ideas derive

from Nietzsche and Heidegger. According to Vattimo, modernity ends when the secularizing, demythifying movement of science with its rationale of unilinear progress recognizes its own mythic components. Given Wells's skepticism toward the idea of evolution when applied on a sociocultural plane, and the awareness of his own myth-making, it seems plausible to conclude that, interestingly, he does arrive at a sense of the "postmodern" in certain of his literary science fictions.

提要

赫伯特・喬治・威爾斯(Herbert George Wells) 的科幻小說，表現了一種矛盾的心態：到底未來世界是美好的「烏托邦」(utopia)，還是醜陋的「反烏托邦」(dystopia)。本文旨在研究他的反烏托邦小說：《時空旅行器》(*The Time Machine*, 1895)，《當睡眠者醒來的時候》(*When the Sleeper Wakes*, 1899) 及他的烏托邦小說：《現代烏托邦》(*A Modern Utopia*, 1905) ，從而探討他的未來景觀。十九世紀描述未來世界的文學作品，以描寫「烏托邦」爲主；到了二十世紀，這類作品卻以「反烏托邦」爲題。威爾斯的作品則恰恰相反。十九世紀末，威爾斯以反烏托邦式的科幻小說建立其科幻小說之父的地位；二十世紀初，他的小說卻充滿著烏托邦式的未來景觀。

儘管威爾斯的作品由「反烏托邦」變成「烏托邦」，他的作品仍然反映其對於世界未來發展的矛盾。他的反烏托邦小說清晰地表達了他懷疑現代科學和「演進」(progress)的態度。在他後期的烏托邦作品中，這種懷疑並沒有消失，只是隱藏在字裡行間。威爾斯的作品由「反烏托邦」變成「烏托邦」，以及他懷疑現代科學和「演進」的態度，主要由三個因素構成，包括他生平的困境與成功、他的社會主義信念、和他中、後期所相信的文學作爲教育工具的觀點。

在結論部分，本文嘗試以當代意大利哲學家華天姆(Gianni Vattimo)的「現代」(modernity)與「後現代」(post-modernity)理論，討論威爾斯的科幻小說。華天姆的「現代」與後「後現代」概念，源於尼采(Nietzsche)和海德格(Heidegger)的哲學。他們認爲，當我們發現現代科學的世俗的、非神話的信念其實仍然具有神話色彩時，「現代」便結束了。由此看來，威爾斯的一些科幻小說，已經具有「後現代」的元素——這些科幻小說，反映了威爾斯懷疑現代科學在社會演進中所起的作用，和他對其作品神話性的認知。

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Contents

Introduction

The ambivalence and antagonism of utopia and dystopia lie at the centre of literary debate in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A number of factors characterize the nineteenth century as "the most utopian century of modern times" (Kumar, *Utopia* 33). With the increasing influence of science, a belief in science and progress takes over the privileged position formerly held by religion in Western society. Moreover, the impact of Darwin's theory of evolution – established as a process toward a higher order of life and hence, it could be argued, a better society and world – also explains the utopianism from the mid to late nineteenth century. In this period, we find some of the most prominent utopian works such as Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888), William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890) and Theodor Hertzka's *Freeland* (1894). Nonetheless, this utopian tradition changes drastically in the early twentieth century partly because of the calamities and dangers created by the two World Wars, the rise of totalitarian authority and the rapid advancement of science and technology. In addition, the belief in science and progress is attacked and revealed as another form of religion by Nietzsche and other philosophers. The twentieth century consequently produces some of the most dystopian works, namely E. M. Forster's short story "The Machine Stops" (1909), Evgenii Zamyatin's *We* (1924), Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four* (1949). For these reasons, the twentieth century is rightly regarded as primarily dystopian.

In contrast to the general development of visionary literature from utopia to dystopia, H. G. Wells's works turn unconventionally from dystopia in the late nineteenth century to utopia in the early twentieth century. Wells's *The Time Machine* and *When the Sleeper Wakes*, published in 1895 and 1899 respectively, have been considered the most important dystopian works in this epoch, while his *A Modern Utopia* (1905) is seen as the most quintessential utopia in the twentieth century. Wells's unconventional shifting from dystopia to utopia, while the fashion in literature changes in the opposite way, deserves a careful analysis in the studies of the nineteenth and twentieth century utopian literature.

In addition to Wells's remarkable innovations in the literary genres of utopia and dystopia, the ambivalence revealed in his future visions is also noteworthy. Although the literary genre Wells employed changes from dystopia to utopia, an ambivalence as to whether the world progresses towards nightmare or paradise never disappears in his future visions. *The Time Machine* and *When the Sleeper Wakes* are written as dystopias, yet when they are studied more carefully, we can draw out another insight. Between the dystopian elements, there are Wells's optimistic attitudes towards the possible benefits of the rightful application of science and technology. Likewise, behind the utopian tone of *A Modern Utopia*, there is the abhorrent London of poverty, dirt, noise and confusion in which the narrator lives. Moreover, the context for *A Modern Utopia* in 1910s Europe is contrary to Wells's utopian sentiments and desires. There were gathering winds of the first World

War and Europe was plagued with social and political problems. Therefore, it seems possible to argue that Wells's ambivalence towards the future of the world always exists in his dystopian and utopian works.

In my thesis, I will argue that there is a persistent ambivalence in Wells's future vision concealed in Wells's transition from dystopia to utopia. The reasons for Wells's transformation from dystopia to utopia and the ambivalence in his future visions are threefold. First, the transformation and ambivalence reflect Wells's personal and career progress. Wells advances from a childhood of cruelty, conflict, insecurities and nightmare to an adulthood of success and prosperity. Both his poor childhood and successful adulthood would certainly affect the attitudes in his future visions. Second, Wells's socialist doctrine, together with his belief in the benefits of the social application of science and technology, persuades him to write in an optimistic tone. Thus, in his later utopian works, Wells's early skepticism toward science and technology and his criticism of the modern idea of progress recede into the background, while his faith in social betterment achieved by science and technology in the control of an elite – the *Samurai* in the utopia of *A Modern Utopia* – is brought to the foreground. Last but not least, in the course of Wells's literary career, he gradually comes to denounce the modernist aesthetic of "art for art's sake" and believes more and more in the educative role of literature. His later utopian works indeed reveal his desires for the betterment of humanity by presenting both models and optimistic projections of humanity's future. Wells had taken up a rhetorical role of a public educator later in his life by providing the

blueprint and desires of utopia in his literary works.

In this thesis, I combine a variety of approaches. First, I will conduct a genre study of Wells's works, focusing on the genre of utopia and dystopia within literary science fiction. I will study in detail Wells's most prominent works from 1895 to 1905 – the most fruitful period in his literary life – namely *The Time Machine* (1895), *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899) and *A Modern Utopia* (1905). The utopian and dystopian ideas expressed by Wells in these works will be discussed. In order to have a clearer understanding of the transformation and ambivalence in Wells's future visions, I will also adopt a historical approach and a biographical approach to study these works. I will set Wells's works in the context of the development of science and technology at the end of the nineteenth century, as well as in the biographical background of Wells to explain Wells's genre transition and his ambivalence. Wells's biographical elements will mainly be drawn from Wells's *Experiment in Autobiography* (1934) and David C. Smith's great biography *H. G. Wells: Desperately Mortal* (1986). Finally, I will discuss the implication of the ambivalence in Wells's works vis-à-vis the concepts of modernity and post-modernity as explained by Italian philosopher Gianni Vattimo, who himself is developing the concepts of Nietzsche and Heidegger.

Critical studies of Wells's utopian and dystopian ideas have been abundant in literary studies. As a result, only a selection of materials will be elaborated in this thesis. Wells's utopian and dystopian ideas and fiction are best treated in Mark R. Hillegas's *The Future as Nightmare: H. G. Wells and the Anti-Utopians*, in which Hillegas chiefly asserts

Wells's central place in the development of utopian and dystopian literature. However, the transformation from dystopia to utopia and the ambivalence in Wells's works are not addressed in Hillegas's work, nor in other published materials on Wells. Thus, my thesis will enrich the contemporary studies of Wells's utopian and dystopian fiction by analyzing Wells's unconventional development from dystopia to utopia and the persistent ambivalence presented in his works.

This dissertation consists of four chapters discussing Wells's future vision in his utopian and dystopian works within the tradition of utopian literature and the context of modernity. Chapter One will address the definitions of "utopia" and "dystopia" and their development in literature. Based on previous studies of these literary terms' definitions, new definitions clarifying them will be given. Moreover, there will also be a discussion of the antagonism and ambivalence between utopia and dystopia, so as to provide a solid background for further analysis of Wells's works.

Chapter Two and Chapter Three study Wells's most significant dystopias, *The Time Machine* and *When the Sleeper Wakes* respectively. The dystopian visions – the nightmare world of the Morlocks and the Eloi in *The Time Machine* and the chaos and bloody revolutions in *When the Sleeper Wakes* – and their impact on literary science fiction and dystopia will be addressed. Wells's ambivalence and the explanation for dystopian preoccupation in these works will be elucidated. These two chapters will also argue that Wells's early dystopian works are mainly shaped by his poor childhood and the *fin de siècle* atmosphere. Thus,

Wells's skepticism toward science, technology and the ideas of progress prevails in these two early dystopias. Chapter Four will study *A Modern Utopia*, which is perhaps the most characteristic and most Wellsian work, in order to illustrate Wells's transition from dystopia to utopia. In addition, this chapter will further elaborate the explanation for the unconventional transition and the constant ambivalence in his works. Lastly, there will be a conclusion drawing out the implications of Wells's ideas with respect to the concepts of modernity and post-modernity.

Chapter One

The Concepts of Utopia and Dystopia in Literature

Utopia and dystopia have become important literary genres in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, yet they remain among the most difficult genres to define. In general, "utopia" denotes a place of ideal perfection that does not exist, while "dystopia" carries the opposite meaning of utopia, signifying a nightmare world of the future. In this chapter, I attempt to clarify the meanings of these two genres, as well as to chart their literary development. In particular, utopia and dystopia have often been defined according to their content, form and function. First, there is the definition in terms of content. Most utopian scholars would agree that utopia should be a portrayal of the good society though there is a great variation in the understanding of the characteristics of the good society. In terms of form, utopia is usually equated with a description of a good society or an ideal commonwealth. The functions of utopia agreed on by most utopian scholars, namely compensation, critique and catalyst, are comparable to that of myth in the sense that myth constructs "*possible* worlds", or utopias of humanity (Ricoeur 490). By replacing good society or ideal commonwealth with the nightmare world of the future, a similar definition of dystopia can be given. Dystopia serves as a counter-reaction toward utopia in the twentieth-century.

This chapter will also study the antagonism and ambivalence

between utopia and dystopia in literature, so as to depict a lucid background for further discussion on the ambivalence in Wells's utopian and dystopian works. As pointed out by contemporary dystopian critics, the term "dystopia" embodies two levels of meanings. First, it means, literally, "nightmare states" (Greek., *dys*-, bad + *topos*, place). Second, dystopia is seen as a synonym of *anti*-utopia because it seems "a sad, last farewell to man's age-old dream of a planned, ideal and perfected society" (Hillegas 3-4). The motivation for the augmentation of dystopias is often explained away by some events of history. The First World War (1914-1918)—"the war to end wars"[1]; the Second World War (1939-1945); the threat of nuclear extinction; the rise of the modern totalitarian state; the ecological crisis; the often questionable benefits of technological and social innovations, among other calamities and dangers, have been argued as the sources for many dystopians to envision a darker future. However, as put forward by Hillegas in *The Future as Nightmare* (1974), the explanation of the dystopian phenomenon in these historical terms is only partially correct,

> for it leaves out of consideration the fact that the modern anti-utopian tradition was shaped by an earlier and somewhat different world, that of the period from the 1890's to World War I. Overwhelmingly, the most important influences of this period in creating the modern anti-utopias were the scientific romances, utopias, and future histories of H. G. Wells, which, even when occasionally written after World War I, are still the unique product of this period. (4)

Thus, without the exploration of both H. G. Wells's utopian and dystopian works, the twentieth-century dystopian phenomenon can only be partially understood.

Utopia is about an ideal imaginary world in which we would like to live if we could. Such images are embedded in origin and destination myths, where "*possible* worlds which transcend the established limits of our *actual* world" are presented to us (Ricoeur 490). Yet the obscure term "utopia" did not emerge until the publication of Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* in 1516. The confusion caused by the equivocal meaning of the term "utopia" has prevailed ever since its first emergence. The title of More's book is coined from Greek *ou* (no) or *eu* (good), and *topos* (place). The pun contains a deliberate ambiguity of "eutopia" or "outopia" (is it a good place or no place?). More contributed to the confusion both by writing to Erasmus on September 3, 1516, "I am sending you my nowhere, which is nowhere well written" and by including a prefatory poem that points out: "The Ancients called me Utopia or Nowhere because of my isolation. ... Deservedly ought I to be called by the name of Eutopia or Happy Land" (Quoted in Lewis 1351). Utopia is thus colloquially understood as a good, but non-existent and therefore impossible, society. The ambiguity persists in contemporary utopian studies thus resulting in a great variety of definitions for the term "utopia." Although utopia has attracted increasing attention, there is still much confusion about exactly what makes a literary text utopian. A brief survey of the existing definitions and a clear and solid definition of utopia are necessary before we proceed to the discussion of utopia and

dystopia in H. G. Wells.

The ambiguity of utopia prevails in contemporary dictionary definitions. *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary* gives both a non-evaluative and an evaluative meaning. Utopia is "an imaginary state described in Sir Thomas More's Latin political romance or satire *Utopia*" and "any imaginary state of ideal perfection." Utopian, however, may mean, besides an inhabitant of utopia, "one who imagines or believes in a Utopia" or "one who advocates impracticable reforms or who expects an impossible state of perfection in society" (Quoted in Levitas 3). The definitions in most dictionaries always reflect the same issues, leaving the confusion of the term to predominate. Utopian scholars are concerned with a wide range of possibilities, and their definitions are sometimes as confusing as those found in ordinary dictionaries. If the definitions are too broad, almost anything proposing a good and impossible society becomes utopian: literary fictions, satire, fantasy, science fiction, religious or secular paradises, political theories, to name but a few areas. Yet without a definition, it is difficult to establish exactly what we are discussing. In practice, most commentators limit what they consider to be properly utopia. In order to study what they have in common and draw agreement of proper limits on the term, it is worthwhile to explore the existing definitions of utopia by considering three different aspects: content, form and function as suggested by Ruth Levitas in her introduction to *The Concept of Utopia*.

Almost all the definitions of utopia by utopian scholars can be considered in terms of content, form and function. Firstly, there is a

common assumption that a utopia should be a depiction of the ideal society. Secondly, utopian scholars often define utopia in terms of form. One version of such a definition is the common sense equation of utopia with a description of a good society or an ideal commonwealth. Thirdly, most commentators of utopias agree that utopia serves as a kind of goal for social progress. Many commentators quote Oscar Wilde:

> A map of world that does not include Utopia is not even worth glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which humanity is always landing. And when Humanity lands there, it looks out, and seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realisation of Utopias. (34)

Consequently, one of the functions of utopia is chiefly to present some kind of goal for social advancement. In Anatole France's words, humanity "would still live in caves, miserable and naked" were it not for a sense of utopia, which provides the "principle of all progress, and the essay into a better future" (Quoted in Levitas 17).

In this overview of utopia, we can only consider definitions in a selection of material. The choice of the material is mainly deduced from Levitas's *The Concept of Utopia* (1990) which gives an excellent evaluation of the most frequently cited commentaries of the period. They are Kaufmann's *Utopias* (1879), Lewis Mumford's *The Story of Utopia* (1922), Joyce Hertzler's *History of Utopian Thought* (1923), Harry Ross's *Utopias Old and New* (1938), Marie Berneri's *Journey Through Utopia* (1950) and Glenn Negley and J. Max Patrick's *The Quest for Utopia* (1952). In *Dictionary of Literary Themes and Motifs*, Arthur

Lewis defines utopia from a literary point of view: "Most scholars agree that three major characteristics distinguish utopia from other literary forms: a utopia is fictional, it deals with a specific unit of society, and its basic theme is the political framework of that unit" (1351). Lewis's definition is obviously concerned primarily with the literary form of utopia.

Indeed, all of the works chosen for discussion in the definition of utopia, whether implicitly or explicitly, define utopia primarily in terms of form. In *Utopias*, Kaufmann provides us with a definition of utopia:

> What is a Utopia? Strictly speaking, it means a 'nowhere Land', some happy island far away, where perfect social relations prevail, and human beings, living under an immaculate constitution and a faultless government, enjoy a simple and happy existence, free from the turmoil, the harassing cares, and endless worries of actual life. (1).

Kaufmann's definition emphasizes form and content. Yet he does mention two functions of utopia. First, utopia is an expression of social discontent, and thus "utopias are the product of social disharmony, indeed social pathology" (Levitas 14). Second, utopias contribute to social progress by embodying a higher ideal and pointing us in the right direction.

Two categories of utopias are drawn in Lewis Mumford's *The Story of Utopia*, namely utopias of escape and utopias of reconstruction. The first category "refers to the projection of desire without the consideration of limiting conditions, which Mumford regards as primitive and

potentially dangerous if indulged in to excess" (Levitas 15). For utopias of reconstruction, Mumford defines utopia as "a vision of a reconstituted environment which is better adapted to the nature and aims of the human beings who dwell within it ... [and] better fitted to their possible developments" (22). According to Mumford, both types of utopias are properly utopia as by placing "desire above reality" and finding their fulfillment only "in the realm of fantasy," they are both good place and no place, eutopia and outopia (267). Although the definition is largely in terms of form, Mumford also points out the functions of utopia. Utopia is considered a means of escape, a compensation, as well as an attempt to change the status quo and to transform the external world.

Like the previous commentators, Joyce Hertzler is similarly preoccupied with progress in her discussion of utopia in *The History of Utopian Thought*. By holding up an unattainable ideal towards which one may strive, utopia is seen as a stimulus to progress. Hertzler does, however, define utopia primarily with respect to form and More's *Utopia*. According to her, utopia is "the general term for imaginary ideal societies" (1). Using the distinctive feature of More's work, she further defines utopia as a depiction of "a perfect, and perhaps unrealizable, society, located in some nowhere, purged of the shortcomings, the wastes, and the confusion of our own time and living in perfect adjustment, full of happiness and contentment" (2). Hertzler also emphasizes substantially of the impossibility of utopias. Thus H. G. Wells is partially described as pseudo-utopian for his utopias "are based in most cases upon proved potentialities, and depend upon normal

evolutionary advance for attainment" (254). Even if we accept impossibility as an essential characteristic of utopia, Hertzler's belief in the possibility of evolutionary and technological advance in the direction described by Wells seems debatable. Thus, the treatment of Wells as a pseudo-utopian seems unconvincing.

Harry Ross's *Utopias Old and New* seems less well-known, yet it raises significantly a number of problematic issues about the definition of utopia regarding both form and content. Ross is the first commentator in our discussion to observe the ambivalent nature of utopia. He reflects seriously on the general agreement that one person's utopia may be another person's hell, and that many utopias are alarmingly authoritarian. Indeed, both Huxley's *Brave New World* and B. F. Skinner's *Walden Two*, have been received by some as utopias and by others as dystopias (Levitas 22). In Ross's work, dystopias are excluded from proper utopias as they are "not so much a Utopia as a nightmare and warning to all who would plan a Utopia" (200). In terms of form, Ross defines utopia as "the picture of an ideal society in action, whether that society is historical or not" (13). Escape is regarded as a legitimate function of utopia. In contrast to Kaufmann's idea of utopia as a higher ideal for social advancement, Ross observes that the effect of utopia is to reconcile the readers to reality. Readers become "more ready to accept the real world and to agree that perhaps this is not such a bad old world after all" (101).

Like Ross, Marie Berneri doubts the assumption of progress and recognizes the ambivalent characteristic of utopia in her *Journey Through Utopia*, which is the first of the post-war commentaries.

Anxiety and pessimism dominate the world after our century of fascism, the Holocaust and the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The dangers of utopia are increasingly recognized, with people increasingly writing and reading dystopias. The function of Berneri's book, like these dystopias, is to constitute a warning against the construction of utopias. Influenced by socialism, Berneri argues that until Engels, "utopia was considered as an imaginary ideal commonwealth whose realisation was impossible or difficult" (207). Afterwards the definition in terms of form is replaced by one in terms of content: Utopia comes to "includ[e] all social schemes which [do] not recognise the division of society into classes, the inevitability of the class struggle and of social revolution" (207). However, being convinced that there is no reason to suppose utopian socialism to be in reality any more unrealistic than scientific, Berneri finally adheres to the first definition in terms of form and considers utopias depictions of "ideal commonwealths in some imaginary country or in an imaginary future" (209).

In Negley and Patrick's *The Quest for Utopia*, utopia is clearly defined in terms of form: "Utopia is a distinct vehicle of expression [which] ... is distinguishable from the other forms in which men have expressed their ideals" (3). Similar to Lewis's definition, Negley and Patrick's also points out the following three characteristics to differentiate utopia from other literary genres. First, utopia is fictional, it "describes a particular state or community" and its "theme is the political structure of that fictional state or community" (3). In particular, the

characteristic of a fictional state distinguishes utopia from political philosophy or political theory. The function of utopia in social progress is implied. Sharing Hertzler's view, Negley and Patrick argue that progress depends upon utopia: "The vision of one century is often the reality of the next," and utopias march on, inspiring humanity to "reshape reality closer to the ideal" (3).

Among the commentators that have been discussed, most of the definitions of utopia are expressed in terms of form. The dominant understanding of utopia is an ideal commonwealth, an imaginary ideal society. Utopia is commonly perceived as more or less complete and couched in fictional terms. Besides the definitions in terms of form, all commentators are concerned largely with function. The acceptance that the proper roles of utopia are to criticize the present and stimulate progress is universal, while both Mumford and Ross identify some utopias as "escapist and compensatory" (Levitas 34). As a result, three different functions are identified: compensation, critique, and catalyst.

However, as reflected by Levitas in *The Concept of Utopia*, definitions in terms of form, content and function are problematic. Levitas argues that content, form and functions will vary in different historical or cultural circumstances. Content "will vary, being a matter not just of personal taste, but of the issues which appear to be important to different social groups, either in the same society or in different historical circumstances" (4). Moreover, "depictions of the good society do not necessarily take the form of literary fictions – and indeed this form is only available under certain very specific historical conditions"

(5). Lastly, the function of utopia is differently represented by different authors. The variation in content, form and function makes it disputable to use them as the definition of utopia. As put by Levitas, definitions in terms of form, content or function not only "place limits upon what may properly be regarded as utopian and thus upon the field of enquiry itself; they also obscure variations in the utopian genre" (7). In order to support this argument, Levitas locates something which remains constant while content, form and function vary. This element, she argues, "is that of desire – desire for a better way of being and living" (7). Therefore, in Levitas's definition, "utopia is the expression of the desire for a better way of being" (8).

Levitas's definition of utopia is the most recent and clear definition among those that have been discussed. However, it includes too many forms of utopia for our discussion of utopia and dystopia in Wells's writings. The definition seems too encompassing and would include the Declaration of Independence, the Weatherman Manifesto, the teachings of major religions, and a newspaper editorial. From a literary point of view, I will work from the following definition: "Utopia" is the expression of the desire for a better way of being in literary fiction about a remote imaginary society or community. The definition I propose actually combines the universal concern with the form of utopia and the common factor of the expression of desire argued by Levitas. This includes most utopias in literature as well as confining them to a fictional form, a common point on which most commentators agree.

The definition of dystopia is usually derived from that of utopia.

"Dystopia" is generally perceived as the negative of utopia or simply "anti-utopia." In *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, dystopia is defined as "an imaginary place where people lead dehumanized and often fearful lives" or a work that describes an anti-utopia ("Dystopia"). The dark opposite of utopia appears largely in the twentieth century, yet in a span of some sixty years, it has established itself as a literary genre. The gradual decline in our times of the utopian novel and its displacement by the "dystopia" or "anti-utopia" are best captured by Karl Meyer's claim in 1954: "Utopia is no more, a new kind of imaginative society which, instead of evolving the possibility of earthly bliss, serves only as a lens through which every barbarity of our age is magnified" (Quoted in Berger 421). A number of terms appear to describe this nightmare society. Meyer calls it "Futopia" meaning "future and futile," Lewis Mumford calls it "Cacotopia;" Erich Fromm, "negative utopia;" many simply call it "anti-utopia." V. L. Parrington's "Dystopia," a Greek combination of *dys* (bad) and *topos* (place), is the most generally accepted term to describe the nightmare world of the future (Berger 421).

The definitions of dystopia can be discussed on the same basis as that of utopia. Among the definitions provided by the commentators who define dystopia, almost all of them are in terms of form, content or function. Dystopia is often defined in relation to utopia. Chad Walsh, in his *From Utopia to Nightmare* (1962), illustrates the definition of dystopia based on that of utopia. As utopia is "an imaginary society presented as superior to any society that actually exists," dystopia is

consequently "an imaginary society presented as inferior to any civilised society that actually exists" (26). Walsh deliberately avoids labeling utopia as a "perfect" or "ideal" society for the reason that "utopias do not present a perfect society, but simply one better than society as we actually observe it." H. G. Wells's *A Modern Utopia* (1905) is an example to illustrate his argument. "It still has its ne'er-do-wells, its drunkards and dope addicts. Yet it is a world considerably more rational and humane than the one we inhabit, and its momentum is towards a still closer approach to perfection" (Walsh 25). Accordingly, dystopia is not necessarily a nightmare world, but a depiction of an inferior one compared to the society in which we live. Walsh's definition is chiefly in terms of form and content.

Mark R. Hillegas likewise defines dystopia in terms of form and content in his *The Future as Nightmare* (1974). Based on the similarity in Zamyatin's *We* (1924), Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four* (1949), Hillegas explains that dystopia

> describe[s] nightmare states where men are conditioned to obedience, freedom is eliminated, and individuality crushed; where the past is systematically destroyed and men are isolated from nature; where science and technology are employed, not to enrich human life, but to maintain the state's surveillance and control of its slave citizens. (3)

These dystopias reveal the anxieties of our age. Sometimes, dystopias are also called "anti-utopias" because they seem an inevitable farewell to people's desire for an ideal and perfected society. They criticize utopias

by illustrating the negative possibilities of utopias, such as dictatorships, surveillance and control of citizens. In *The Future as Nightmare*, Hillegas points out that there is a close relationship between H. G. Wells and the dystopian tradition of the twentieth century. He argues that most dystopian writers are somehow influenced by the utopian and dystopian works of Wells. Hillegas further illustrates this argument with the following reasons. Since these reasons provide a strong foundation for my thesis, they are worth quoting at length:

> The first is that the great anti-utopias of the twentieth century constitute, with Wells's scientific romances, future histories, and, to some extent, utopias, a single kind of fiction ... science fiction. Although Wells's work had various ancestors, it is from him that the writers of anti-utopias learned the uses of this form. Second, many of the central as well as peripheral images in the anti-utopias were first generated in Wells's early scientific romances, chiefly those written in the 1890s. Third, the relationship between Wells's writings and the major anti-utopias extends beyond images and form. To an extraordinary degree the great anti-utopias are both continuations of the imagination of H. G. Wells and reactions against that imagination. At the same time they often attack ideas that Wells championed, in many cases ideas which were in turn a protest against the decaying Victorian order of things. Altogether, it is doubtful that without Wells the anti-utopian phenomenon would ever have taken the shape it has. (5)

For this reason, utopian and dystopian works of H. G. Wells are discussed in order to study the ambivalent nature of utopia, as well as the ambivalence in Wells's works.

The emergence of dystopia can also be understood as closely related to the ambivalent nature of utopia. As illustrated by the fact that one person's utopia may be another person's hell, the attempts at instituting utopia are perceived as highly dangerous and leading to totalitarianism. In his foreword to Berneri's *Journey Through Utopia*, George Woodcock sets the tone for Berneri's discussion of utopia; according to Woodcock, the intolerant and authoritarian nature of most utopias and the dangers of utopia are increasingly recognized. Berneri further points out that the tradition of utopian schemes is fading out, with the trend of modern literature being increasingly dystopian because when utopia becomes realizable, it is no longer a desirable society, but a nightmare one. As Nicholas Berdiaev puts it:

> Utopias appear to be much more capable of realisation than they did in the past. And we find ourselves faced by a much more distressing problem: How can we prevent their final realisation? ... Utopias can be realised. Life advances towards utopia. And perhaps a new century is beginning, a century in which the intellectuals and the cultivated classes will dream of the means by which the utopias can be avoided and how we can return to a non-utopian society, less 'perfect' and more free. (Quoted in Berneri 309)

A number of reasons for this anxiety of the realization of utopias are

raised by Berneri, including new totalitarian regimes, a departure from a belief in progress, an increasing distrust rather than confidence in the beneficence of machinery and a new perception of the problem of the relationship between the individual and the state. Among these factors, it is the consequent authoritarianism of the nineteen-century utopias, which Berneri holds largely responsible for the rise of anti-utopianism.

Apart from form and content, dystopia is also defined according to its function as social critique. In Dragan Klaic's *The Plot of the Future* (1991), dystopias are defined as "the satires of the present, predictive satires of the pitfalls of so-called progress, and, more generally, satires of utopian ambition itself" (69). For Berneri, the function of dystopias is to constitute a warning "of the doom that awaits those who are foolish enough to put their trust in an ordered and regimented world" (xi). The functions of dystopia allude to the meaning of its synonym – "anti-utopia." Dystopia is against utopia as it points out the fact that utopian success in one area opens a Pandora's box of dystopian reactions. It provides a warning against the implementation of utopias. Again, definitions in terms of form, content and function are problematic as these will vary according to different historical and cultural circumstances. Therefore, a new definition has to be offered. Drawing on the definition of utopia that I use in this thesis, "dystopia" should be defined as the expression in literary fiction of the anxiety of the world getting worse. This definition serves the purpose of this thesis sufficiently as it provides clear characteristics of dystopias for our further discussion of the ambivalence of utopia and dystopia in H. G. Wells's

work.

As we have defined utopia and dystopia, we can find that the works which more or less fit within our boundaries exist as early the seventh century BC. These utopian images are often embedded in origin and destination myth. While the happy life can not be found in this world, it is available to us in a lost golden age or heaven beyond death. Hesiod's *Works and Days*, of the early seventh century BC, depicts the Golden Age when men "lived as if they were gods, their hearts free from all sorrow, and without hard work or pain;" when "the fruitful earth yielded its abundant harvest to them of its own accord, and they lived in ease and peace upon their lands with many good things" (Quoted in Kumar, *Utopia* 3). Similar utopian images are given in "Homer's Phaeacia, ... Horace's Isles of the Blest, and the Hyperboreans, Meropians, Thulesians, and ... exotic societies described in the Hellenistic romances" (Lewis 1352). Although these utopian thoughts are often included in the canon of utopias, the most important utopian writings of the classical world are those of Plato, whose *The Republic* is one of the most discussed utopian works among utopian scholars. Indeed, the threefold hierarchy of philosopher-kings, executive agents, and ordinary producers and artisans in Plato's utopia are unequivocally recognizable in Wells's *A Modern Utopia*, which consists of four main classes of mind: the Poietic, the Kinetic, the Dull and the Base.

Plato's *The Republic* expresses the basic paradigm upon which the ideal state would be portrayed and its pattern has been followed by succeeding utopian writers to the present day. In this work, Plato

attempts to provide the meaning of justice. In his so-called Seventh Letter, Plato describes the belief that permeates his utopian works: "I was forced, in fact, to the belief that the only hope of finding justice for society for the individual lay in true philosophy" (Quoted in Lewis 1352). Plato's utopia is far more authoritarian than many modern utopian writers. The just life of the largest class, the citizens, depended upon the hands of Guardians, rulers and soldiers. After proper education, the Guardians would become perfect rulers who "hold property in common, permit no marriage, treat children as the children of all, and maintain absolute equality between men and women" (Lewis 1353). However, in Plato's later work *Nomoi* (*The Laws*, c. 350 BC), the dictatorial rule described in *The Republic* has been substituted by a constitutional government. *Nomoi* is more practical than *The Republic*. Nevertheless, its idea of communal property has often been attacked because critics believe it would cause laziness and loss of benevolence.

In utopian studies, Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) is the only work which is universally discussed. In fact, the term "utopia" did not exist prior to More. The form of *Utopia* is taken as a model of utopia as a literary genre, involving the fictional depiction of an alternative society in some detail. After criticizing the "unreasonable polity of Christian Europe, divided by self-interest and greed for power and riches" in Book I, More then wrote Book II to provide a notable pagan and communist city-state in contrast with the depiction of reality in Book I ("Utopia"). The utopia described in Book II "is an agricultural-based society of small cities, communal property, contempt for gold, and equality among the

heads of the family units" (Lewis 1354). We can see the influence of Plato on More, yet "the pre-Christianity of his Utopians is close to many of the Christianized utopian visions that followed soon after" (Lewis 1354).

> If we were to identify a handful of texts as the agreed canon of utopias before the nineteenth century, these would be Plato's *Republic*, Thomas More's *Utopia*, Tommaso Campanella's *City of the Sun* (1602) and Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627). The utopian writings of Campanella and Bacon attempt to reconcile the "truths" of science and religion. Campanella's socialistic work *La Città del Sole* [*The City of the Sun*], written while he was a prisoner of the Spanish Inquisition (1599-1626), describes his ideal commonwealth in which all citizens belong to the state and must contribute to the good of the community as best they can. Furthermore, there is no private property, undue wealth, or poverty for no man is permitted more than he needs. Great emphasis is placed on science and technology in the compulsory education for both men and women.

Bacon's *New Atlantis* also places great emphasis on science and technology in the depiction of the imaginary island of Bensalem, a hierarchical society. Lewis provides an excellent picture of Bensalem emphasizing the importance of science:

> The heart of Bensalem is the House of Salomon, a college for scientific research and application that much resembles the modern research institute. Knowledge, Bacon said, is power, and

> scientific knowledge is more likely to bring superior power than any other kind. The influence of this work in the development of modern Western technology is far out of proportion to its length and has made Bacon's name synonymous with that of the enemy among those modern thinkers who regard the technological road as the wrong one for humanity to have taken or to continue to follow. (1356)

The idea that humanity would ultimately be perfected through advancements in technology and in science has great influence on the utopias to come, especially on Wells's *A Modern Utopia*, a depiction of a scientific utopia. A later work, *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933), which suggests that scientists and engineers will manage the world for the good of mankind, also supports the view that scientific progress will lead to human perfection. The utopian elements in *A Modern Utopia* will be discussed at length in Chapter Four.

Human perfectibility, proposed by the idea of survival of the fittest, prevails in the utopias in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward 2000-1887* (1888) and William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890) are two utopian works that contain the same belief in the perfectibility of mankind. *Looking Backward*, a vision of ideal technology, set in Boston in the year 2000, describes the United States as an ideal socialist system of "cooperation, brotherhood, and an industry geared to human need" ("Bellamy, Edward"). While Bellamy praises machinery as a means to a better life in *Looking Backward*, Morris, a socialist, points out that "technology is beneficial when shared

with everyone but that reliance on machinery tends to make men slaves of those very machines" (Lewis 1365). Morris's utopia is an agrarian, small village society that glorifies the personal craftsmanship and a simpler life style.

The twentieth century utopian tradition has been gradually superseded by dystopian works. The most prominent dystopian works include Zamyatin's *We* (1924), Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four* (1949). Zamyatin's *We* "portrays life in the 'Single State,' where workers live in glass houses, have numbers rather than names, wear identical uniforms, eat chemical foods, and enjoy rationed sex. They are ruled by a 'Benefactor' who is unanimously and perpetually reelected" ("Zamyatin"). In Zamyatin's dystopia, human beings become docile and dull. The motif of humanity lost in the advancement of science and technology is reflected in Huxley's *Brave New World*. Huxley's dystopia depicts "a society of the near future in which technology was firmly enthroned, keeping human beings in bodily comfort without knowledge of want or pain, but also without freedom, beauty, or creativity, and robbed at every turn of a unique personal existence" ("Criticism of Technology").

In George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four*, a political dystopia is effectively portrayed. In the totalitarian society, we can distinctly observe a number of prominent dystopian features, which in Lewis's words include:

> (1) the dictatorship of "the Party," whose object is power; (2)

> the denial of the self – self-awareness, self-esteem, self-assertion, self-fulfillment – and servility to the group; (3) the execution or brainwashing of dissidents; (4) the destruction of the capacity to think, through the perversion of language and the rejection of empirical evidence; (5) the divorce from the values and memory of the past; (6) the installation of the Party as the sole judge of truth; and (7) the maintenance of cultural stasis. (426-427).

The dystopian tradition described above owns its form and ideas to H. G. Wells. As argued by Hillegas in his *The Future as Nightmare*, the dystopian tradition is greatly influenced by the early dystopian works of H. G. Wells. Apart from utopian works, H. G. Wells also wrote a number of dystopian works that shape the genre and ideas in later dystopian works. In *The Time Machine* (1895), Wells suggests that the current trend toward a technologically oriented materialistic society would result not in a utopia but in the destruction of all mankind. In *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899), he attacks the overall monopoly or totalitarian government advocated by some early utopians. While twentieth century literature is dominated by dystopian works, the canonical works of Wells become more utopian than dystopian. After *The Time Machine* and *When the Sleeper Wakes*, Wells produces mainly utopian works such as *A Modern Utopia* and *The Shape of Things to Come*. In the following chapters, Wells's unconventional genre transition and his ambivalence in the future vision will be studied in relation to his biographical and

historical contexts.

Chapter Two

The Early H. G. Wells: *The Time Machine*

The twentieth century utopian tradition has often been described as anti-utopian or, more specifically, dystopian. Literary works objecting to utopian ideas as either unworkable or potentially totalitarian have been prominent since the end of the nineteenth century. Although H. G. Wells is often perceived as an advocate of a world-state[1] filled with super-gadgets and scientific and technological amazement, Wells's early scientific romances and stories ironically present a vision of anti-utopia. In *The Time Machine* (1895), it is suggested that the current trend toward a perfect world achieved by the progress of science and technology would result not in a utopia but in the destruction of all mankind. After conquering nature, unchallenged man might evolve into a species like the frail, docile, childlike Eloi. In *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899), the overall monopoly advocated by Bellamy and others as a means to the good life is attacked. In the future world of the latter novel, the result of the monopoly is a heavily industrialized society in which only a favored few might have access to the fruits of technological production while most of mankind would be mere victims, subject to totalitarian control of all human activity.

Indeed, Wells's numerous literary works demonstrate an unequivocal ambivalence between utopian and dystopian depictions of the future. Apart from these two prominent dystopian works, Wells's dystopian

vision also permeates much of his early science fiction, like *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896), *The Invisible Man* (1897), *The War of the Worlds* (1898) and *The First Men in the Moon* (1901). Contrary to the later widespread identification of Wells with scientific optimism, Wells's early science fiction is permeated with Wells's skepticism and, in W. T. Stead's[2] words, "the gloomy horror of his vision" (Quoted in Hillegas 17). In this chapter, the influences of Wells's early dystopian works on the genres of science fiction and dystopias will be illustrated. Moreover, probably the most prominent dystopian work of Wells, *The Time Machine* (1895) will be discussed with respect to the definition of dystopia in terms of form, content and functions. Finally, I will develop my thesis to explain the reasons behind Wells's early dystopian preoccupation in *The Time Machine.*

The influences of Wells's early science fiction on the development of science fiction and the genre of dystopia are elaborated in Mark R. Hillegas's *The Future as Nightmare* (1974). Hillegas points out that the explanation of the rapid rise of the dystopian phenomenon in cultural and political terms is inadequate. He argues that the modern dystopian tradition is chiefly shaped by the period from the 1890s to World War I. In this period, the most important works in creating the modern dystopias are the early science fiction of Wells. It is from Wells that the writers of dystopia acquire the use of this form. Most prominent dystopian works in the twentieth century, for example, E. M. Forster's "The Machine Stops" (1909), Evgenii Zamyatin's *We* (1924), Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four* (1949), are

written in the form of science fiction. In "The Machine Stops," Forster imagines a giant machine which provides communication devices and servomechanisms to mankind. Forster's future world is hypothesized on the basis of innovations in science and technology. In this world, mankind has become a wasted inmate living in the bowels of a world machine, with each person remaining almost permanently isolated in a subterranean hexagonal cell. The dystopias[3] in the other three works are similarly created on the basis of the hypothesis of pseudo-science or pseudo-technology.

Since the great dystopias, along with prominent writings of Wells's that we are discussing, are written in the form of literary science fiction, there is a need to define this and explain the relationship of Wells's works to the development of science fiction and dystopia in the twentieth century. In order to deal with the impact of actual or imagined science upon society or individuals, literary writers discuss possible futures in the genre of science fiction. Science fiction is generally used to refer to any literary fantasy that includes a scientific factor as an essential orienting component. The precursors in the contexts of the genre can be traced back to the alien cultures in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), to the space travel in Voltaire's *Micomagas* (1752), to the creation of human life in Mary Shelley's Gothic novel *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (1818) and to the metamorphosis in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886). However, science fiction properly began toward the end of the nineteenth century with the scientific romances of Jules Verne and the science-

oriented novels of social criticism by H. G. Wells. The development of science fiction as a self-conscious genre dates from 1926 when Hugo Gernsback founded *Amazing Stories: The Magazine of Scientification*, which was devoted exclusively to science-fiction stories.

For a good beginning to the definition of "science fiction," we can refer to Kingsley Amis. Amis writes in his *New Maps of Hell*, "science fiction is that class of prose narrative treating of a situation that could not arise in the world we know, but which is hypothesised on the basis of some innovation in science or technology, or pseudo-science or pseudo-technology" (18). Accordingly, "science fiction" is "distinguished from pure fantasy by its need to achieve verisimilitude and win the willing suspension of disbelief through scientific plausibility" (Hillegas 8). In view of the great dystopias and science fiction that I have discussed, certain additions should be added to Amis's definition of "science fiction." Science fiction, as well as dystopia, often makes a significant comment on human life. As demonstrated by Wells's science fiction of social criticism, "science fiction" is usually a vehicle for social criticism and satire. Moreover, "science fiction" is also a "prediction or extrapolation, from existing knowledge and conditions, of things to come" (Hillegas 9).

Wells, with what should be called "the Wellsian imagination," stood out as a prominent science fiction writer in the early twentieth century (Hillegas 13). He has been sometimes called "the Father of Science Fiction" (James 12) and even the "Shakespeare of science fiction" (McConnell 3) for his importance in the genre. His influence upon the

development of science fiction is enormous. In his science fiction, as well as in numerous short essays on the future, Wells not only reached and impressed a very large number of people, but also set the agenda in subject-matter and tone for much of the science fiction to come. In Wells's science fiction, we can find stories of time-travel (*The Time Machine,* 1895), the creation of new forms of life (*The Island of Dr. Moreau,* 1896), alien invasion (*The War of the Worlds,* 1898), space travel (*The First Men in the Moon,* 1901), utopia (*A Modern Utopia,* 1905), dystopia (*When the Sleeper Wakes,* 1899), future warfare (*The War in the Air,* 1908), food to boost animal growth (*The Food of the Gods,* 1904), and so on. Wells is greatly interested in the future of the world and he presents both utopian and dystopian depictions of the future in his science fiction. Yet to grasp the central place of Wells in the development of dystopian science fiction, we can do no better than to narrow our focus down to *The Time Machine* and *When the Sleeper Wakes*. As pointed out by Hillegas, the most significant science fiction by Wells was written in the 1890s, "which led, in their turn, by a complicated process which also involved reaction against the Wellsian utopias, to the major anti-utopias of the twentieth century" (15). The early science fictions of Wells are significant in the sense that they shape the later dystopias to come.

Wells has had a great impact on the dystopias of the twentieth century. Hillegas relates a plausible explanation for this phenomenon in his *The Future as Nightmare*. He points out that Wells had an "enormous popularity with the generation reaching maturity in the first decades of

the twentieth century". Indeed, all the major dystopian writers fall roughly into this generation: E. M. Forster was born in 1879, Evgenii Zamyatin in 1884, Aldous Huxley in 1894, C. S. Lewis in 1898, and George Orwell in 1903 (5). The popularity and influence of Wells on dystopian writers are echoed in Orwell's comment of 1941:

> Thinking people who were born about the beginning of this century are in some sense Wells's own creation. How much influence any mere writer has, and especially a "popular" writer whose work takes effect quickly, is questionable, but I doubt whether anyone who was writing books between 1900 and 1920, at any rate in the English language, influenced the young so much. The minds of all of us, and therefore the physical world, would be perceptibly different if Wells never existed. (121)

However, when Wells's writing shifted from dystopias to utopias, most dystopians rebelled against Wells and the ideas he presented in his later utopian works, which will be discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis.

Our discussion of Wells's dystopian works properly begins with *The Time Machine* (1895), Wells's first science fiction and perhaps the most influential dystopia in modern dystopian tradition. The story begins with a group discussion among persons representing well-known types, namely the Scientist, Psychologist, Politician and Journalist. The Time Traveller makes the idea of time travel possible by introducing Time as a Fourth Dimension in geometry:

> "...You know of course that a mathematical line, a line of

thickness *nil*, has no real existence. They taught you that? Neither has a mathematical plane. These things are mere abstractions."

"That is all right," said the Psychologist.

"Nor, having only length, breadth, and thickness, can a cube have a real existence.'

"There I object," said Filby. "Of course a solid body may exist. All real things—"

"So most people think. But wait a moment. Can an *instantaneous* cube exist."

"Can a cube that does not last for any time at all, have a real existence?" (3-4)

Here, we are convinced by the Time Traveller to believe that there are "four dimensions, three which we call the three planes of Space, and a fourth, Time" (4). Thus, we can travel freely along Time as we do along the three dimensions of Space. The Time Traveller concludes: "*There is no difference between Time and any of the three dimensions of Space except that our consciousness moves along it*" (4).

Wells invents the genre of time travel as he makes time travel plausible by scientific logic in *The Time Machine*. He is not the first writer to invent the technique of time travel. As Hillegas relates, time travel stories have been created since Mercier's *L'An 2440* (1772).[4] The popularity of time travel stories begins with Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888) and William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890).

However, it is Wells's theory of Time as the Fourth Dimension and his solid and specific description of the Time Machine that make time travel believable. The idea of time travel is brought into being by Wells's scientific logic of Time as the Fourth Dimension. Hence, there is a captivating modernity in Wells. As argued by Aldridge, readers of modern times – with their skeptical minds – are "conquered" by Wells's myths that "are as logical as mathematical equations" (65). In addition to the "scientific" logic, the vivid description of the Time Machine by the narrator also helps to persuade the readers to believe in the possibility of the invention of a Time Machine:

> Parts were of nickel, parts of ivory, parts had certainly been filed or sawn out of rock crystal. The thing was generally complete, but the twisted crystalline bars lay unfinished upon the bench beside some sheets of drawings, and I took one up for a better look at it. Quartz it seemed to be. (10)

With this machine, the Time Traveller journeys to the future of the year 802,701 and, later, to the end of time and the world. In this story, Wells provides a complete picture, "or a prophecy," of the development of the world in a universal sense (78). Yet this picture, anti-utopian in its tendencies, seems a nightmare much worse than the present. Therefore, this story fits perfectly into the definition of dystopia in terms of form.

The ambivalent world of the year 802,701[5] is central to the dystopian content of *The Time Machine*. This world, inhabited by the Eloi in the "Upperworld" and the Morlocks in the "Underworld", [6] is ambivalent in the sense that it is portrayed as both a utopia and dystopia. The Time

Traveller first perceives the earth in the year 802,701 as a garden of Eden. The earth has become a pastoral utopia in that year. The earth has "become a garden" (27) and "everywhere ... [are] fruits and sweet and delightful flowers; brilliant butterflies ... [flow] hither and thither" (28). The weather is mild and warm and nature is perfect to the people living in it. Small and individual buildings are replaced by communal and "palace-like buildings" (26). "Communism" is the word the Time Traveller uses to describe what he first observes in this world. However, a second look reveals that this world is not only a decaying paradise, but also a dystopia of the "sunset of mankind" (Hillegas 29).

In *The Time Machine*, Wells takes the prevalent late-Victorian rural paradise, like the one revealed in Morris's *News from Nowhere*, and overturns it. In his introduction to *The Time Machine*, John Lawton writes, "*The Time Machine* is *Bad News from Nowhere*" (xxxvii). The strong connections between *The Time Machine* and *News from Nowhere* are also raised by Patrick Parrinder in his article "Possibility of Space and Time (*The Time Machine*)." Parrinder provides an excellent comparison of these two novels in his essay:

> *The Time Machine* is both an explicitly anti-utopian text, and one which deliberately recalls *News from Nowhere* at a number of points. Morris's pastoral, idyllic society is centred on Hammersmith in West London, while the society of the Eloi is centred two or three miles upstream at Richmond. Both are placed in a lush parkland replacing the nineteenth-century industrial and suburban sprawl beside the River Thames. The

> Eloi, like the inhabitants of Nowhere and of most other contemporary socialist utopias, eat together in communal dinning halls. William Guest, Morris's 'time traveller', learns about the history of twentieth- and twenty-first century England from an old man at the British Museum, while Wells's Traveller journeys to the Palace of Green Porcelain, an abandoned museum of the arts and sciences modelled on the Crystal Palace and the South Kensington Museum. On the evening of his first day with the Eloi, the Traveller climbs to a hilltop, surveys the countryside and exclaims '"Communism"' (Chapter 4) to himself. The Communism he has in mind must be the pastoral utopia of Morris and Thomas More, rather than the revolutionary industrial society of Marx and Saint-Simon. (43-44)

Every aspect of the description in Wells's utopia corresponds clòsely with Morris's ideal world in *News from Nowhere*. Drawing on what appears to be a "Morrisian utopia" that Wells considers as "fatally flawed," Parrinder concludes that *The Time Machine* is "an explicitly anti-utopian text" (43).

The social paradise in *News from Nowhere* is openly satirized when the first utopian impressions of the Time Traveller are followed by disillusionment. A closer look at the palace-like buildings of Wells's utopia shows that the world of the year 802,701 is decaying:

> And perhaps the thing that struck me most was its dilapidated look. The stained-glass windows, which displayed only a

> geometrical pattern, were broken in many places, and the curtains that hung across the lower end thick with dust. And it caught my eye that the corner of the marble table near me was fractured. (23-24)

The sphinx is depicted as "greatly weather-worn" and imparting "an unpleasant suggestion of disease" (19). The people living in this utopia, the Eloi, are also degenerating: "The too-perfect security of the Upper-worlders [Eloi] had led them to a slow movement of degeneration, to a general dwindling in size, strength, and intelligence" (45). Energy, strength and intelligence would become weakness under "the new conditions of perfect comfort and security" (29). Therefore, the fragile little creatures waste "all their time in playing gently, in bathing in the river, in making love in a half-playful fashion, in eating fruit and sleeping" (38).

The decaying utopia in the year 802,701 turns to a horrible nightmare when the Time Traveller discovers the second degenerated species of mankind: the pale, ape-like Morlocks, who live below ground and leave their subterranean world at night to hunt down the Eloi for food. The utopians in this reversed world have become "mere fatted cattle," preserved and preyed upon by the Morlocks:

> [Morlocks'] prejudice against human flesh is no deep-seated instinct. And so these inhuman sons of men – ! ... After all, they were less human and more remote than our cannibal ancestors of three or four thousand years ago. And the intelligence that would have made this state of things a torment

had gone. … These Eloi were mere fatted cattle, which the ant-like Morlocks preserved and preyed upon – probably saw to the breeding of. (55-56)

This cannibalism of the Morlocks and the helpless status of the Eloi reverse the status of the pastoral utopia so that it becomes a horrible dystopia of the degeneration of mankind.

In addition to the degeneration of humanity, the Time Traveller also encounters the extinction of mankind in a frozen, dark and dying world when he goes further forward to the world of thirty million years ahead:

> The darkness grew apace; a cold wind began to blow in freshening gusts from the east, and the showering white flakes in the air increased in number. From the edge of the sea came a ripple and whisper. Beyond these lifeless sounds the world was silent. Silent? It would be hard to convey the stillness of it. All the sounds of man, the bleating of sheep, the cries of birds, the hum of insects, the stir that makes the background of our lives – all that was over. As the darkness thickened, the eddying flakes grew more abundant, dancing before my eyes; and the cold of the air more intense. At last, one by one, swiftly, one after the other, the white peaks of the distant hills vanished into blackness. The breeze rose to a moaning wind. I saw the black central shadow of the eclipse sweeping towards me. In another moment the pale stars alone were visible. All else was rayless obscurity. The sky was absolutely black. (75)

This eschatological vision of the Earth is presented by Wells with a

poetic and mythical sentiment. In McConnell's words, Wells here is the "poet of the abyss, the perfect lyricist of entropy" (86).

Wells's *The Time Machine* serves as social critique and thus follows the definition of dystopia in terms of function. In this story, Wells gives a warning about the degeneration of mankind after the progress of science and technology, and reveals his political allegory. By the mid-nineteenth century, with the Industrial Revolution in full spate, science had gained a prestige that continued until the demonstration of the awesome power of science and its application in weapons in the two world wars. Nevertheless, Wells already raises his concerns about the social impact of the rapid advancement of science and technology in *The Time Machine* before the wars. He doubts the promise of an ideal and perfect world achieved by science and its application in technology. He shows in this dystopia that even if a perfect world could be realized, such perfection would erode the energy, strength and intelligence of humanity.

In *The Time Machine*, we have Wells's premonition of a humanity lost amidst the progress of science and technology. Nevertheless, the benefits of science and technology already exist in Wells's mind. For instance, after the achievement of medical science and the invention of perfect preventive medicine, the air in the year 802,701 is "free from gnats, the earth from weeds or fungi" (28). Moreover, with the comfort and security produced by science, the Time Traveller concludes that this pastoral utopia has "no danger of war or solitary violence, no danger from wild beasts, no wasting diseases to require strength of constitution, no need of toil" (29). However, human beings suffer rather than benefit

from this perfect environment. They become little fragile creatures – the Eloi – without any energy, strength or intelligence. Consequently, the Eloi become the food of the cannibal Morlocks. By illustrating the degeneration of humanity that comes along with the progress of science and technology, the Time Traveller discloses Wells's ambivalence and skepticism towards the advancement of science and technology.

The Time Machine serves as a political allegory and becomes a social criticism by satirizing the capitalistic society in England in the nineteenth century. After the discovery of the Morlocks, the cannibal predators living in the "Underworld," the Golden Age of the "Upperworld" is revealed as a dystopia. Moreover, the degeneration of the Morlocks to cannibal animals is shown as the result of the selfishness and unfairness of capitalistic society. The Time Traveller hypothesizes:

> So, in the end, above ground you must have the Haves, pursuing pleasure and comfort and beauty, and below ground the Have-nots, the Workers getting continually adapted to the conditions of their labour. Once they were there, they would no doubt have to pay rent, and not a little of it, for the ventilation of their caverns; and if they refused, they would starve or be suffocated for arrears. (44)

Obviously, the Eloi represent the capitalists and the Morlocks the labourers. At first, the Morlocks are forced to live in the "Underworld." Gradually, they become well adapted to the subterranean conditions. When food runs out, they degenerate to cannibal predators and prey on the Eloi, who have become powerless after a long period of comfort and

security. Thus, there is an exchange of position between the Morlocks and the Eloi. The Morlocks, representing the labourers, take the place of masters while the Eloi, or the capitalists, become the sufferers in this dystopia. This is a vivid warning against the selfishness of the capitalistic society. As revealed by the Time Traveller, the victimization of the Eloi is perceived as "a rigorous punishment of human selfishness" (56). This, then, is Wells's message: people enjoying the exploitation of their fellows will eventaully become the victims.

The Time Machine presents chiefly a dystopia of humankind's horrible degeneration. The preoccupation of Wells's pessimistic future vision revealed in this novel is threefold. First, Wells's early scientific career[7] introduces T. H. Huxley's interpretation of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution[8] and Lord Kelvin's theory of entropy.[9] These two scientific theories partly persuaded Wells to depict humankind's degeneration and the dying universe. Second, Wells was greatly influenced by the Victorian *fin de siècle*, that forecasted the waning of humankind and the cosmos, when he wrote this novel at the end of the nineteenth century. Last, the contrast between the "Upperworld" and "Underworld" in this novel can be seen as an autobiographical reflection of Wells's childhood in an underground environment. In other words, Wells's scientific belief, the Victorian *fin de siècle* and Wells's own early life shape the dystopian tone of this novel.

The degeneration of humanity into the Morlocks and the Eloi in *The Time Machine* reinforces the Wellsian idea of evolution, which can be stated simply, "Evolution runs backwards" (Lawton xxxii). When Wells

studied for a science degree at the Normal School of Science in London's Kensington, as a trainee teacher, he was taught by Thomas Henry Huxley on the subject of Biology. Huxley was seen in his time as Darwin's defender and advocate.[10] His impact on Wells is summed up in Wells's own words written for *The Listener* in 1935:

> I was Huxley's disciple in 1885, and I am proud to call myself his disciple in 1935. I wish I had followed his example of cool-headed deliberate thinking, plain statement and perfect sincerity more completely. But few of us have the steadfastness of his mental quality. Clear thought is the quintessence of human life. In the end its acid power will disintegrate all the force and flummery of current passions and pretences, eat the life out of every false loyalty and out of every craven creed, and bite its way through to a world of light and truth. That faith was confirmed in me by Huxley, and I have held to it for half a century because he lived and I knew him. (Quoted in Lawton xxxii)

Wells read and listened to the teaching of Huxley. He adopted the doctrine of evolution from Huxley's perspective. The dystopia of degeneration is shaped by Huxley's cosmic pessimism. In Lawton's words, the nightmare in this novel "is contained in Huxley' lecture of 1892, *Evolution and Ethics*, in which he coined the term 'retrogressive metamorphosis' stating that 'all forms of life will die out'" (xxxiii).

For Huxley, the lesson of evolution is a bitter and possibly a tragic one. The characteristics of our civilization and our differences from the

beasts – such as morality, decency and love – are seen as mere excrescences. The only human nature is the hunger for nutrition. As Huxley reflects in his *Evolution and Ethics*, the only law nature knows is the law governing the relation of the eaters and the eaten. Thus, in the *Time Machine*, we have the two degenerated neo-human species: the Morlocks as the eaters and the Eloi as the eaten.

Wells's pessimistic vision of the end of the world is partly shaped by the late nineteenth century preoccupation with the second law of thermodynamics, better known as the theory of entropy, advocated by Lord Kelvin. This law is often paraphrased as "everything disperses in time" or "Nature tends to disorder" (Lawton xlvii). The second law alludes to a preoccupation with the end of the world because it suggests that the universe is a finite enclosure in which energy is limited. The sun's energy will dissipate in a one-way process until it burns out. Eventually, the Earth will become unfit for life and the solar system will wane. In fact, as the ambivalence in his future visions reveals, Wells could never ignore the shadows cast across his belief in progress by the law of entropy and the theory of evolution.

The dystopian vision of *The Time Machine* is also largely a vision of its time. Apart from scientific theories, there was a sense of *fin de siècle*[11] in 1890s London. In Bergonzi's words, Wells's work reflects "many of the fears and preoccupations of the final years of the nineteenth century" ("Ironic Myth" 54). Bergonzi reinforces this idea by quoting a passage, by Max Nordau, which anticipates the themes and dominant images of *The Time Machine*:

> *Fin de siècle* is at once a confession and a complaint. The old Northern faith contained the fearsome doctrine of the Dusk of the Gods. In our days there have arisen in more highly developed minds vague qualms of a Dusk of the Nations, in which all suns and all stars are gradually waning, and mankind with all its institutions and creations is perishing in the midst of a dying world. (54).

Moreover, London in 1890 was a noisy, dirty, smoky and foggy town. More and more lower class people lived and worked underground in harsh conditions, which – as generalized by Eric Hopkins in his *A Social History of the English Working Class: 1815-1945* – "were dirty, insanitary and inconvenient" (4). So when the Time Traveller observes the separation between the Morlocks and the Eloi, he reflects: "Even now, does not an East-end worker live in such artificial conditions as practically to be cut off from the natural surface of the earth?" (44)

To understand fully the contrast between the "Underworld" and the "Upperworld" in *The Time Machine*, we should take a time machine to look at Wells's early life. Wells was born in 1866 to Sarah and Joseph Wells in Bromley, Kent. Wells's family were from the lower middle class and after his father broke his leg, they became even more financially disadvantaged. For Wells, as Ken Davis writes, "childhood was thus a time of cruelty and conflict, bringing insecurities and even nightmares" (110). Wells, in his own words, "lived ... mostly downstairs and underground" in his childhood (*Autobiography* 24). During his years as a shop apprentice, he also lived and worked in subterranean dormitories

and stockrooms. As David Smith explains, Wells's work as a draper "began at 7.30 a.m. and lasted until 8 p.m., or even later, in the dark, forbidding building where the shop was located" (7). Wells's despairing early life is best summed up in Smith's excellent biography of Wells:

> Wells seemed destined, in these first fifteen years of his life, to spend much of his time underground, in dark and dismal surroundings. Raised in an underground kitchen ..., he lodged in cellars or garrets, dim, closed in, filled with shadows, away from the sun, in all of the apprentice homes where he was forced to stay. Even at Up Park,[12] access to the kitchens and the area 'below tunnels' ... was through dark, winding, unlit tunnels. (7)

Wells's own experience described here forms the labyrinth of underground tunnels leading to the darkness occupied by the Morlocks in *The Time Machine*. Moreover, Wells's poor health also contributed to his pessimism in this story. He had suffered from poor health since the 1880s. In 1888, Wells was hurt by one of the students he taught with a kick to the kidneys. He began to spit blood and when the doctors examined him, they also found evidence of tuberculosis, known as consumption at the time. He was afflicted by this illness until the end of the nineteenth century (Smith 14). Wells's desperate childhood and his poor health in his early adulthood, together with the despairing conditions of London in 1890s, persuaded him to depict the future world in a dystopian mood.

Despite the common perception of Wells as an advocate of utopia or

the world state, Wells's first significant science fiction, *The Time Machine*, is perhaps the most important dystopia in modern dystopian tradition. It is the model of the later dystopias to come. As we have seen, *The Time Machine* fits fairly well into the definition of dystopia in terms of form, content and function. In this story, Wells also reveals his personal and socialist preoccupations. In the following chapter, I shall discuss in more detail Wells's dystopian sentiment and preoccupation in the complementary story, *When the Sleeper Wakes*.

Chapter Three

From Dystopia to Utopia: Wells's Ambivalence in *When the Sleeper Wakes*

When the Sleeper Wakes[1] and *The Time Machine* present Wells's complementary future visions. While *The Time Machine* chiefly describes a distant future, a dystopian world of the year 802,701, *When the Sleeper Wakes* depicts a world that is essentially an extrapolation of Wells's own late nineteenth-century England. As they introduce complementary visions, *When the Sleeper Wakes* can be considered as the complementary story of *The Time Machine*. The themes and pattern of *When the Sleeper Wakes* follow that of *The Time Machine*. However Wells's vision of the future has been altered in *When the Sleeper Wakes*. He has portrayed an ambiguous dystopia revealing his deep ambivalence about the liberating possibility of technology in his later fiction. The condemnatory and dystopian tone shown in *The Time Machine* has been neutralized by the fantastic description of the future society and the implication of victory of the proletariat in the final episode. Actually, *When the Sleeper Wakes* marks the transition in Wells's works from dystopian to utopian. After the publication of this story, Wells produced mainly utopian visions of the future. Nevertheless, *When the Sleeper Wakes* is still largely a dystopia according to the definition proposed in this thesis. The images and symbols it creates in describing the world of the year 2100 provided great resources for later dystopias.

The nightmare images depicted in *When the Sleeper Wakes* greatly influenced the prominent dystopias of the twentieth century, namely Evgenii Zamyatin's *We* (1924), Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four* (1949). In addition to discussing the dystopian elements and their impact on the later anti-utopias in this chapter, I will also shed light on Wellsian ambiguity and ambivalence in this transitional novel. Finally, I argue that Wells's ambivalence in *When the Sleeper Wakes* was chiefly caused by the improvement in his finances and career and the interaction between the Victorian *fin de siècle* and his new role as a prophetic writer.

The dystopian world of the twenty-second-century is vividly presented by Wells in *When the Sleeper Wakes*. The plot of this story combines Edward Bellamy-like romance and uninspired melodrama. Graham, the sleeper of the title, falls into a trance of two centuries in 1897 and wakes up in twenty-second-century London. The idea of a trance and waking up in future resembles Bellamy's device in *Looking Backward*.[2] Indeed, this story can be considered as a Wellsian answer to Bellamy. In Wells's twenty-second-century London, the result of the overall monopoly advocated by Bellamy is a mechanized society in which the working class are bitterly oppressed and exploited. As pointed out by Kumar in his *Utopia & Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*, Wells shows "his most explicit debt to Bellamy while at the same time savagely ... [criticizing] the hyper-industrial civilization of *Looking Backward*" in *When the Sleeper Wakes* (186). Indeed, when Graham reflects on the world he finds in the future, he thinks of Bellamy's socialist utopia.

However, after realizing that the "ancient antithesis of luxury, waste and sensuality on the one hand and abject poverty on the other, still prevailed," Graham concludes that here is "no Utopia, no Socialist state" (*WSW* 52).[3] In this sense, this fiction qualifies as a dystopia, since through it, Wells expresses his anxiety about the world getting worse under the present development of capitalism and monopoly.

Graham awakes in the spring of 2100 and finds himself in an oppressive and tyrannical slave-state. Due to the increase on investments made in his name, he has become the literal owner of half the world and the symbolic hope of the oppressed masses. While he sleeps, a council of twelve "able men" have ruled in his name and increased the material standard of living for the affluent at the expense of the proletariat. Graham's awakening is a signal for a revolt against these councilors by the oppressed masses led by Ostrog, who intends to manipulate them and to maintain the economic status quo with the unwitting help of the initially naïve Graham. Ostrog,[4] a self-interested political boss, does not believe in human equality and is not interested in the emancipation of the workers. He is rather a "proto-fascist believer in the Over-man theory of humanity" (Kumar, *Utopia* 186).[5] Eventually Graham learns about the terrible realities of the workers' condition and the duplicity of Ostrog, and he takes on the leadership of the rebellion in the workers' name. He prevents the landing of Ostrog's African police, who come to suppress the masses. The ending of this story is ambiguous. Nonetheless, we are certain of Graham's death and the workers' victory.

The darkness of the world is partly constructed by the great contrast

Graham finds between his ideal and the reality he faces after his awakening. In the beginning of the story, we are told that Graham has been "a fanatical Radical – a Socialist – or typical Liberal ... of the advanced school" (18). He has hoped that "the sacrifice of the many to the few would some day cease, that a day was near when every child born of woman should have a fair and assured chance of happiness" (120-121). After two hundred years, his hope is "still unfulfilled" and he finds in this gigantic city even more than before the "poverty and helpless labour and all the sorrows of his time" (121). Graham, a socialist who believes in equality, ironically finds the world in the year 2100 an "aristocratic tyranny," ruled by the Council in his name (166). Of the contrast between the privileged and underprivileged in the twenty-second century London, Hillegas remarks:

> It is an amoral, materialistic society, consisting, beneath the bosses, of first a dwindling "middle class" of thoughtless, irresponsible seekers after sensation and pleasure, the minor rich and petty officials as well as "foremen, managers, the medical, legal, artistic and scholastic classes." Beneath this middle class lies the great mass of the population, ever increasing in numbers, the blue-uniformed slave workers of the Labour Company – "anaemic millions" crushed by the complexity of machine civilization, everywhere displaying "pale features, lean limbs, disfigurement and degeneration." (43)

The juxtaposition of the disfigured subterranean workers and people of

privilege and personal grace in an evolutionary vision foreshadows – in terms of future history, the year 802,701 – the Morlocks and Eloi of *The Time Machine*. Workers are gradually being turned into Morlocks in the subterranean factories while the "parasitic lunatics" (*WSW* 187)—the middle class and rulers—are degenerating into Eloi in their comfortable "Upperworld."

Indeed, the most dystopian element in this story unfolds during Graham's visit to the subterranean factories in Chapter 21, "The Under side," of *When the Sleeper Wakes*. Here Wells describes Graham's visit to the underground factories manned by blue-clad workers, who work in dust and darkness, minding machines, becoming pale and disfigured by their labour. When Graham and his guide Asano descend to the factories, Graham notices that

> [t]he appearance of things [had] changed. Even the pretence of architectural ornament disappeared, the lights diminished in number and size, the architecture became more and more massive in proportion to the spaces as the factory quarters were reached. And in the dusty biscuit-making place of the potters, among the felspar mills in the furnace rooms of the metal workers, among the incandescent lakes of crude Eadhamite, the blue canvas clothing was on man, woman and child. (188)

The dystopian elements in this novel are elucidated in a series of vivid images and increasing brutal scenes of working-class life. In the places of toil, Graham notes "the pinched faces, the feeble muscles, and weary eyes of many of the latter-day workers" who have become merely

machine-minders and feeders, servants and attendants. (189). In addition, the workers are overseen by the Labour Police who are armed with clubs to punish any disobedient actions. Through these factories and places of toil, Graham gradually understands the seriousness of the economic inequity of the year 2100. After this episode, Graham, as well as the readers, comes to realize that "an inequitable distribution of wealth – not science misused or an over-extension of scientific logic" – forms the most significant dystopian component of *When the Sleeper Wakes* (Aldridge 68).

As with the preoccupations in the pessimistic vision of *The Time Machine*, Wells's dystopian vision in this novel is also shaped by his wretched early life, the cosmic pessimism of T. H. Huxley and the Victorian *fin de siècle*. The labyrinth of underground factories that forms the most dystopian scene is again a recurring image of Wells's underground childhood. In addition, as pointed out by Aldridge in his "Origins of Dystopia: *When the Sleeper Wakes* and *We*," Wells's science fiction is chiefly an extrapolation of the evolutionary process under the conditions existing in *fin de siècle* England:

> The so-called cosmic pessimism of T. H. Huxley has emerged in Wells's fear that evolutionary processes might work against mankind. To demonstrate this fear he extrapolates from his vision of the already dystopian social and economic realities existing in *fin de siècle* England. (70)

Trapped within the Victorian *fin de siècle*, Wells could not escape the nineteenth-century fear of the machine.[6] In *When the Sleeper Wakes*,

there are several unequivocally dystopian uses of science and technology in its future world. For example, Graham is annoyed by the "Babble Machine," which, like the contemporary mass media, announces crude and distorted bits of news and advertisement through the city's public ways. He is also dismayed by the kineto-tele-photographs, like television, which have replaced books.

The dystopian elements of social discontent and revolution in this novel are also influenced by the Victorian *fin de siècle*, since these elements obviously "relate to the Socialist ferment and labor unrest of the 1890's" (Hillegas 41). Wells's chief dystopian vision has been an extrapolation of the evils caused by capitalism and its effects on human life after two hundred years of scientific and technological progress. Wells explains this extrapolation years later in his *Experiment in Autobiography:*

> [T]he future in *When the Sleeper Wakes* was essentially an exaggeration of contemporary tendencies: higher buildings, bigger towns, wickeder capitalists and labour more downtrodden than ever and more desperate. Everything was bigger, quicker and more crowded; there was more and more flying and the wildest financial speculation. (550-1)

In this passage, we can see Wells's criticism of capitalism. Indeed, the dystopia in this novel is largely caused by the political control of a few councilors who obviously represent the capitalists of Wells's time. Thus, Wells writes pithily in Chapter 11, "They worked politics with money" (91). The intertwining of wealth and power drives the future world to

oligarchy and dictatorship, which was a major part of the political and economic conditions of Wells's era:

> [Wells] was writing in the age of the industrial Robber Barons, the age of J. D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie – an age when capital outgunned democracy in many cases quite literally – almost the age of Henry Ford, a man who created the capitalist nightmare of the production line that no compromise seems capable of solving, and whose name became a dubious symbol of technological supremacy, machine over man, in Wells's work. Again, Wells at his pithiest, 'The whole world was property.' (Lawton xxxix)

The emergence of the "capitalist nightmare" in the Victorian *fin de siècle* explains Wells's opposition to Bellamy's idea of overall monopoly advocated in *Looking Backward*. In *When the Sleeper Wakes* Wells has presented a nearer dystopia in terms of temporal dimension. The dystopia depicted in this novel seems more plausible and relates more closely to the present society as most of the dystopian elements are formed by extrapolating the conditions of Wells's time. Therefore, the dystopian themes and images in this novel have often been borrowed by the later dystopias of other writers.

Among Wells's numerous future fictions, *When the Sleeper Wakes* is perhaps the best example to elucidate the assertion that Wells provides a major inspiration for the dystopias of Orwell, Aldous Huxley and Evgenii Zamyatin. The dystopian vision illustrated in this novel not only reaches back to *The Time Machine*, but also looks forward to the images

and themes of Zamyatin's *We*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four*. The impact of *When the Sleeper Wakes* on these dystopias is significant:

> More than any of Wells's works, *Sleeper* provides the major themes and much of the imagery for the great dystopias. As in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, for example, the political boss in *Sleeper* admits that he is motivated by a desire for power for its own sake; in *Brave New World*, benevolent social and psychological engineering (hypnotism in Wells) releases individuals from the pain of emotional crises; and as in *We*, the setting is an architecturally stunning, automated urban state. (Aldridge 67)

Apart from the dystopias mentioned in this passage, the heirs of *When the Sleeper Wakes* are also to be found in Kurt Vonnegut's *Player Piano* (1952) and Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953).[7] *Player Piano* is a critique of science and totalitarianism while the later novel is "the *Brave New World* kind of ... [dystopia] brought up to date to fit a post-atomic bomb, post World War II age" (Hillegas 158). Once initiated, Wells's original vision of dystopia leads to a strong strain of dystopian fiction. The total and totalitarian city in *When the Sleeper Wakes* seems to have had a stranglehold on the imagination of later dystopias.

Zamyatin has been described as "one of Wells's keenest literary disciples" (Aldridge 64). In 1922 Zamyatin published a monograph, *Herbert Wells*, in which he praised Wells for being the creator of a new genre, namely science fiction. *We* was written at about this same time,

during 1920-21. It was banned in the Soviet Union and published in New York in English in 1924. Much of the imagery and narrative detail is indebted to Wells's work, particularly to *When the Sleeper Wakes*. As pointed out by Hillegas, one of the most important similarities between *When the Sleeper Wakes* and *We* has been the "image of the supercity" (106). The features of the Wellsian supercity are illustrated in the scene that first greets Graham when he awakes and steps out on the balcony:

> His first impression was of overwhelming architecture. The place into which he looked was an aisle of Titanic buildings, curving spaciously in either direction. Overhead mighty cantilevers sprang together across the huge width of the place, and a tracery of translucent material shut out the sky. Gigantic globes of cool white light shamed the pale sunbeams that filtered down through the girders and wires. Here and there a gossamer suspension bridge dotted with foot passengers flung across the chasm and the air was webbed with slender cables. A cliff of edifice hung above him, he perceived as he glanced upward, and the opposite facade was grey and dim and broken by great archings, circular perforations, balconies, buttresses, turrent projections, myriads of vast windows, and an intricate scheme of architectural relief. (35)

Moreover, Wells's glass-roofed mechanical city ends abruptly in a great wall, outside of which lies the now uninhabited countryside. The essential features of this city can also be found in *We* which depicts a city "glassed-covered, mechanically complex, sealed off from nature by the

Green Wall" (Hillegas 107). Another significant similarity between these two novels is shown in the prototype of rebellion against the totalitarian authority by the oppressed masses. The rebellion led by I-330 and her friends against the regimentation of the great mechanical city of the United State demonstrates *We*'s further indebtedness to Wells.

Beside these major similarities, there are many other minor echoes in *We* of *When the Sleeper Wakes*. For example, the Guardians in *We* are inspired by the Labour Police in Wells; the operation in D-503's brain to remove fantasy by Wells's "psychic surgery"; the phono-lectures by the "Babble Machine"; the Child Educational Refinery by the "mechanical crèches"; the numbered uniforms of the citizens of the United State by the numbered blue canvas suits of the Labour Company workers; the structural glass, out of which so many things are made, by "the recently invented glass-like substance" used to roof over London (Hillegas 108). From these similarities, we can assert that Zamyatin borrowed many important details and images from Wells's dystopia in *When the Sleeper Wakes*. These dystopian details and images in *When the Sleeper Wakes* and *We* consequently take their turns to anticipate the dystopia of Aldous Huxley. For example, the Pleasure cities[8] in *When the Sleeper Wakes* foresee the sex and soma[9] of Huxley's *Brave New World*. Huxley's State Conditioning Centres are the crèches[10] in *When the Sleeper Wakes*. The colored class-marking uniforms of the Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons resemble the blue canvas of the Labour Company in Wells's work.

Apart from *We* and *Brave New World*, *Nineteen Eighty-four* is also

greatly indebted to *When the Sleeper Wakes*. Wells's picture of a slave-state ruled by a totalitarian tyranny in a mechanical city provides Orwell with the basic elements of his plot. Besides the central dramatic situation, numerous details and images in Orwell can be traced back to *When the Sleeper Wakes*. For instance, both works are preoccupied with the miserable life of the proletariat. Moreover, Orwell's Thought Police resemble the Labour Police while Orwells's telescreens are derived from Wells's General Intelligence Machine, used to disseminate propaganda. In addition, the "re-education" of Winston Smith can be traced to Wells's hypnotism (Hillegas 130-1). *When the Sleeper Wakes* has provided great resources for some of the most prominent dystopias in the twentieth-century with its plot, details and images.

Although *When the Sleeper Wakes* fits fairly well into our definition of dystopia, there are already some veiled elements of utopia in this work, which reveals Wells's ambivalent attitudes towards the future of the world under the rapid advancement of science and technology. In fact, this novel has often been described as an ambiguous dystopia.[11] Although it contains vivid fictional description of a dystopia and expresses Wells's anxiety of the world getting worse and is considered the ancestral dystopia of others to come, it also contains several unequivocally utopian descriptions of the future society, unveiling Wells's ambivalent attitudes towards the uses of science and technology. As noted by Bergonzi in *The Early H. G. Wells*, "if one examines particular passages of the novel, one gets the impression that an idealizing and a satirical intention are *both* at work" (146-7). In fact,

there are many aspects of the future society that are glowingly described, many of which are the hallmarks of Wells's distinctive utopias to be treated in our later discussion. For example, in *When the Sleeper Wakes*, the future society provides great comfort and security for its inhabitants:

> Life and property, indeed, were secure from violence almost all over the world, zymotic diseases, bacterial diseases of all sorts had practically vanished, everyone had a sufficiency of food and clothing, was warmed in the city ways and sheltered from the weather – so much the almost mechanical progress of science and the physical organisation of society had accomplished. (120)

In twenty-second-century London, nature, diseases and famine have been conquered by the progress of science. Moreover the world of the year 2100 "is a triumph of science, technology and rational planning" (Kumar, *Utopia* 187). In this world, all the repetitive work of society is done by machines which only need to be tended by the labourers. Population growth and occupational needs are controlled by a rational system of eugenics. Protected and sheltered by glass from the wild weather, people live in one gigantic city that is climate-controlled and powered by huge windmill dynamos which lie outside the city domes. There are aeroplanes for transportation over long distances and moving platforms for that within the city. Recalling the well-known scene that first greets Graham when he awakes[12], we can survey the grandeur and massive futuristic city through the eyes of a nineteenth-century man.

In fact, the first two-thirds of the novel, despite occasional hints of a

darker reality, are full of objective and sometimes acclaiming descriptions of the technological developments that have created the future. Lawton, in his introduction to *When the Sleeper Wakes*, gives an excellent list of Wells's inventions:

> This is by no means a definitive list but they include: London as a mega-city in the style of Chicago; elevated walkways; an enclosing dome; television and video; duodecimal maths and phonetic alphabet, colour-coded class and occupation uniform; aeroplanes; wind-driven power generation; Eadhamite super-roads and a form of aerial wire-transport; muzak; the Open University; psycho-surgery; hypno-learning; euthanasia; Platonist child-rearing and, less technologically, widespread reforms in education and sexual relations. (Lawton xxxvii-xxxviii)

Among these numerous technological developments, Wells praises highly the "aeropile." Graham feels intense excitement deriving his first ride on the plane: "His exhilaration increased rapidly, became a sort of intoxication. He found himself drawing deep breaths of air, laughing aloud, desiring to shout. After a time that desire became too strong for him, and he shouted" (*WSW* 144). After his first flight, Graham acclaims that he has slept two hundred years merely to fly (*WSW* 148). As analyzed by Aldridge, the dystopian effect in this novel is somehow cancelled out by Graham's childlike enchantment with this machine and the structure of the plot development:

> Not only are two successive chapters (16 and 17) devoted to

> the ecstasies of flying (and other technical wonders), but those chapters are curiously placed between revelations that an appalling underworld exists in the city. Graham is told in chapter 15 that "The common people are very unhappy; they are oppressed – they are misgoverned." And in chapter 18 he learns that the workers are pale, sickly, desperate, and virtual slaves to the Labour Company. But in the meanwhile he has taken time out to explore the novelty of flying machines. (70)

This intervening plot structure and Graham's obsession in the "aeropile" create a sense of ambiguity; in effect Wells's praise of the machine and his dystopian description are neutralizing each other.

Apart from Wells's glorification of the technological development, the ending of the novel also reveals a utopian hope for the world of the year 2100. As suggested by Aldridge, Wells has implied in the last episode "Graham's death, the likelihood that the workers' cause has been won, and the implication that a new era is dawning" (68). In his "Utopian and Anti-Utopian Logic: H. G. Wells and his Successors," Huntington echoes the suggestion of utopian liberation at the end of this novel: "Embedded in the horror of dystopian servitude are gestures of utopian liberation, and while the novel ends on an ambiguous note, it is also clear that it has by the end broken clear of the static conflicts of anti-utopia" (125). As the dystopia in the society of the year 2100 is caused by political tyranny, Graham perceives that to save the world he must lead the revolution against Ostrog. Like the *samurai* in *A Modern Utopia*, Graham serves as he leads the revolution. He proves he is not like Ostrog

by sacrificing himself at the end. He probably dies in the middle of an apocalyptic victory with the perception that "[w]e have started Armageddon" (*WSW* 216). Wells, through the optimistic ending of this novel and the glorification of the machine, implies that the machine-dominated future does not have to be a nightmare. So the novel implies that if society is properly ruled and managed by an elite, like Graham and the *samurai*, the dystopia in the future might be transformed into utopia.

Wells's glorification of the machine and his prediction of a utopia after political reform in *When the Sleeper Wakes* have indicated his transition from dystopia to utopia. In his *The Early H. G. Wells*, Bergonzi attributes the ambivalence and ambiguity in this novel to the fact that Wells was in transition from artist to prophet or publicist when he wrote this novel:

> Between 1899 and 1901 the split between the artist and the prophet or publicist became overt; from the point of view of the latter, the imaginative achievement of his first few years could be dismissed as 'the result of falling in love with an effect in writing for its own sake.' The unhappy mixture of fiction and prophecy in *When the Sleeper Wakes* was the first clear indication that Wells was ceasing to be primarily an artist, responding in imaginative and mythical terms to the life of his times, and was turning to a more directly intellectual treatment of the problems of the present and the possibilities of the future. (142)

After the publication of this novel, the direction Wells takes in his

literary life becomes clear. Wells the Prophet and Wells the Scientist become paramount in his vision of future, a vision that begins in earnest with *When the Sleeper Wakes*. In this novel, there are hints that the dystopian conditions of the workers can be alleviated by "a 'scientific' restructuring of society in combination with technological advances properly used" (Aldridge 71). After the restructuring "through a stage of violent upheaval – the apocalyptic battle led by Graham" – humanity might begin again and it might also lead to a utopia out of an ambiguous dystopia (Aldridge 72).

Wells's transition from dystopianism to utopianism can also be explained by the progress in his career. After the publication of *The Time Machine*, Wells had become a famous and successful writer and was then ready for a new role. By 1895, he had divorced his first wife Isabel and married his former student Catherine Robbins, who gave his home life whatever stability it would have until her death in 1927. By 1900, he had built himself a splendid new home, Spade House, at Sandgate, where his friends and neighbours included Henry James, Joseph Conrad and Ford Madox Ford (Kumar, *Utopia* 187-8). With the improvement of his social status and health, Wells turned from a dystopian to a prophet or utopian.

In his later utopian works, Wells tries to conceal his ambivalence with his enthusiasm towards the technological development. This change has occurred because for the first time Wells introduces his plan for controlling technology, the idea of a ruling elite. The book discussed in the next chapter, namely *A Modern Utopia* is "devoted to proving in specific terms that a ruling elite is indeed possible in this world and that

moral control can thus be established over technological power" (Sussman 192-193). We shall see in more detail the utopian elements and Wells's utopian sentiment and preoccupation in the following discussion of his most famous utopian novel, *A Modern Utopia*.

Chapter Four

Utopia and the Scientific World State: *A Modern Utopia*

Wells produced a number of utopian texts after the publication of *When the Sleeper Wakes* in 1899 and hence established himself as the "greatest of the modern utopists" (Kumar, *Utopia* 168). The very titles of his books after the turn of nineteenth century demonstrate his desire for utopianism: *Anticipations* (1901), *Mankind in the Making* (1903), *A Modern Utopia* (1905), *New Worlds for Old* (1908), *The World Set Free* (1914), *Men Like Gods* (1923), *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933). Among these novels, *A Modern Utopia* is Wells's first explicit utopia though it is not the most finished or perfected of them. We can find more complete accounts in *Men Like Gods* and *The Shape of Things to Come.* His utopian philosophy as a whole is more clearly enunciated in the great educative enterprise summed up in his trilogy *The Outline of History* (1920), *The Science of Life* (1930) and *The Works, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind* (1932). However, as pointed out by Kumar in his *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*, there are good reasons to regard *A Modern Utopia* as Wells's most important utopian vision, deserving special treatment when considering his utopianism. First, it was written at the height of Wells's creative powers. From 1895 to 1911, Wells had published his finest science fiction and best "serious" novels – *The Wheels of Chance* (1897), *Love and Mr Lewisham* (1900), *Kipps* (1905), *Tono-Bungay* and *Ann Veronica* (1909), *The History of Mr Polly*

(1910) and *The New Machiavelli* (1911). Moreover, he had only recently entered the field of social speculation and enquiry and his ideas were still far from the "rigid dogmatic qualities" of his later years (Kumar, *Utopia* 190). Therefore, Wells was able to present his utopian themes in this novel with the benefit of his creative imagination and his lively style.

The most characteristic and "Wellsian" of his books, *A Modern Utopia* illustrates the Wellsian motifs of the scientific world state and utopia (West 178). In this chapter, I will discuss this novel with respect to the definitions of utopia elaborated in Chapter One. Furthermore, I will try to explain the proliferation of utopian themes in Wells's later works. As shown in Chapter Three, Wells's utopian preoccupation relates, in part, to the significant progress of his personal life at the time. In addition to the aspects of Wells's biographical background, I will also elaborate on how Wells's socialist doctrine and his insistence on the educational function of literature influence the depiction of utopia in his later works.

The originality of the literary form used in *A Modern Utopia* greatly challenges the traditional forms of utopia. After rejecting in turns the "serious" essay, the "discussion novel" of Peacock and Mallock, the Socratic dialogue and the "hard narrative," meaning straight narrative, Wells adopted the fictional form which – as he intended – achieved "a sort of shot-silk texture between philosophical discussion on the one hand and imaginative narrative on the other" (Note xlvi-xlvii). Unlike most utopias in the dialogue form of Plato's *Republic*, the fictional form in *A Modern Utopia* is original and attractive. By an act of imagination,

we are presented with utopia without the description of its establishment. The narrator and his companion stray into another dimension of space when they are on a walking holiday in the Alps. In this space, they find an Earth-like duplicate circling the sun in a solar system parallel to our own: "It is a planet like our planet, the same continents, the same islands, the same oceans and seas, another Fuji-Yama is beautiful there dominating another Yokohama – and another Matterhorn overlooks the icy disorder of another Theodule" (*AMU* 9).[1]

A Modern Utopia has been described as a "meta-utopia" by Patrick Parrinder in his "Utopia and Meta-Utopia" and in "Wells and the Aesthetics of Utopia" for the novel seems "a summary of 'personal adventures among Utopian philosophies'" ("Aesthetics" 23). The motif of summarizing and discussing utopian ideas is obvious in *A Modern Utopia*. In between the spurts of fictional travelogue, there is a "sustained comparative discussion making systematic reference to about twenty previous utopian writers," as well as to utopian sects, architects, communities and languages ("Meta-Utopia" 99). Plato is of course the most alluded to writer, followed by More, Morris, Bacon, Cabet, Campanella and Bellamy. Later, in his *Experiment in Autobiography*, Wells frankly admits his debt to Plato and More as he notes, "*A Modern Utopia*, quite as much as that of More, derives frankly from the *Republic*" (562). The reference to many of the major works in the utopian tradition is also highlighted in Lewis Mumford's *The Story of Utopias*. For Mumford, *A Modern Utopia* is "the quintessential utopia," in which

Wells "sums up and clarifies the utopias of the past, and brings them into contact with the world of the present" (184).

The meta-utopian elements in *A Modern Utopia* do not abate any of the originality of Wells's utopian content. As noted by Hillegas, Wells has created the "archetypal utopia" refreshed with science and technology: *A Modern Utopia* "becomes the utopia transformed into an archetypal blueprint for the scientifically planned welfare state, as well as an early major statement of Wells's dream of the world state" (66). The centrality of *A Modern Utopia* for twentieth-century utopianism and dystopianism is also stressed in I. F. Clarke's comments in his *The Pattern of Expectation 1644-2001*. For Clarke, "Wells had produced the most up-to-date utopia in the history of the genre" and *A Modern Utopia* "remains the most important utopia of the twentieth century" (Quoted in Kumar, *Utopia* 191). This novel not only makes the idea of progress possible, but also becomes the model from which the dominant dystopias of the last hundred years have taken their subjects and shape.

The content of this utopia is chiefly characterized by these "distinctive and major features": utopia seen as dynamic, not static; utopia as a world state, not an isolated community; utopia as a state recognizing fully the important role of science and technology; and lastly utopia as a good government led by the voluntary nobility, the *samurai* (Hillegas 70). These four major utopian features greatly determine the utopian content and the subsidiary details about marriage, family, education, employment and so forth in utopia.

The first feature of Wells's imaginary world state that proclaims it a

quintessentially modern utopia is its "evolutionary dynamism" (Kumar, *Utopia* 192). In her "H. G. Wells's *A Modern Utopia* as a Work in Progress," June Deery argues that *A Modern Utopia* "is about progress, that is, about social and technological advance as opposed to the more retrospective paradise of ancient mythology" (217). The traditional utopias of static perfection, such as the "Nowheres and Utopias men planned before Darwin quickened the thought of the world," are rejected by Wells. In the opening chapter of *A Modern Utopia*, Wells puts forward his idea of an ever evolving dynamism to replace the stasis of the utopias of earlier fiction:

> Those were all perfect and static States, a balance of happiness won for ever against the forces of unrest and disorder that inhere in things. One beheld a healthy and simple generation enjoying the fruits of the earth in an atmosphere of virtue and happiness, to be followed by other virtuous, happy, and entirely similar generations, until the Gods grew weary. Change and development were dammed back by invincible dams for ever. But the Modern Utopia must be not static but kinetic, must shape not as a permanent state but as a hopeful stage, leading to a long ascent of stages. Nowadays we do not resist and overcome the great stream of things, but rather float upon it. We build now not citadel, but ships of state. (5)

The perception of utopias as "perfect and static States" is no longer possible and the modern utopia must be kinetic, not static, must shape itself as a series of ever changing and progressing stages toward

perfection. The implications of the Victorian belief in progress and of Darwin's evolutionary theory in Wells's utopia are clearly unveiled. Although Wells did not entirely abandon the evolutionary pessimism that permeated the early science fiction, he began more and more to emphasize the positive side of the evolutionary theory. Wells adopted the idea that the conscious, deliberate evolution of humanity's intellectual and moral capacity could come to replace "the blind warfare of natural selection" (Davis 113).

The ever evolving dynamism in Wells's utopia is partly demonstrated partly through the betterment of humanity accomplished by the state's family and population control. The inhabitants of Wells's utopia are classified into four types, namely the Poietic, the Kinetic, the Dull and the Base. The utopian classes are not hereditary and are divided according to the qualities of their minds. The Poetic, the creative class of mentality – embraces types of citizen who possess creative imaginations or the ability to discover or invent. The Kinetic class consists of citizens who are often "very clear and capable people," but are less interested in imagination and creation. The Dull are persons of inadequate imagination; the people who never seem to learn thoroughly, hear distinctly or think clearly. The definition of the Base is not concerned so much with the quality of their minds. They may be poietic, kinetic or dull, though most of them are the last, but they are without a "moral sense" (*AMU* 157-159).

There is no state breeding in Wells's utopia since he realizes the complexity of human heredity. Nevertheless, there are measures to

improve the race of the utopians, as well as to ensure the diminishing of the Dull and the Base and the elimination of the failures. First, the failures, drunkards, criminals and other social misfits, are exiled to prison islands where they remain childless (*AMU* 85). In order to have offspring, the utopian citizens "must be above a certain minimum of personal efficiency," which is proved by "holding a position of solvency and independence in the world." Moreover, they have to be "above a certain age, and a certain minimum of physical development, and free of any transmissible diseases" (108). As long as the citizens observe the population and family control which governs the evolution of the utopian species, they will be "properly housed, well nourished, and in good health, reasonably clean and clothed healthily" (81). The state will also secure the proper nurture of children by providing free education and making motherhood a service to the state. A mother is entitled to wages, respect and dignity, like all professionals in utopia.[2] Through the state's interference, the population in utopia is expected to improve and all will become *samurai*,[3] an elite group of utopians in the ruling order of the state, at the end (176).

The dynamism of *A Modern Utopia* is further revealed by its utopian history, "a succession of powers rising and falling" in an oscillation between the dominance of the "creative" and the "efficient" types. Through the "poietic" activity, "the idea of a community has developed, and the State has shaped itself." Then, the control of the state gradually falls to the kinetic class for the "poietic should be mutually repulsive, and

not succeed and develop one another consecutively" (*AMU* 160-161). However, after the transition from the creative "poietic" phase to the efficient kinetic one, the state loses its creativity and ability to adapt itself to new circumstances. Then, through war or revolution, creative "poietic" energy is once more infused into the state, and the cycle begins again before the state becomes utopia. This cycle has been broken by "its recognition of the need of poietic activities" in Wells's utopia. "Poietic" types are encouraged through the education system and, later, through the award of fellowships (161). The systems of laboratories and "the world-wide House of Saloman" is an acknowledgment of the substantial role of "poietic" activities in the state (163).[4] The privileged position of "poietic" activities in utopia ensures its creativity and the ability to adapt to new circumstances. Thus, the dynamic progress of the state has been secured with stability.

In addition to the dynamism, Wells's idea of a *global* world state also contributes another important utopian feature to the content of *A Modern Utopia*, which foresees the "globalization" of the late twentieth century.[5] Wells notes that classical utopias are often conceived of as isolated communities, as in Plato's *Republic*, Bacon's *New Atlantis* and More's *Utopia*. However, there is a tendency toward an ultimate world system in the more recent ones. Bellamy's *Looking Backward* posits "a vague world federalism" and Wells makes the issue of political organization central to his *A Modern Utopia* (Kumar, *Utopia* 194). In his discussion of the global utopia, the narrator addresses the readers:

> No less than a planet will serve the purpose of a modern Utopia. ... We are acutely aware nowadays that, however subtly contrived a State may be, outside [its] boundary lines the epidemic, the breeding barbarian or the economic power, will gather its strength to overcome you. The swift march of invention is all for the invader. Now, perhaps you might still guard a rocky coast or a narrow pass; but what of that near tomorrow when the flying machine soars overhead, free to descend at this point or that? A state powerful enough to keep isolated under modern conditions would be powerful enough to rule the world, would be, indeed, if not actively ruling, yet passively acquiescent in all other human organisations, and so responsible for them altogether. (*AMU* 8-9)

A world state is made possible and desirable due to the invention of technologies like that of the flying machine and a world-wide communication system – the "perfected telephonic connection with the rest of the world" (*AMU* 130). Since science and technology will conquer any physical distances and barriers in the world, the utopia must be a global state in order to be free from invasion and disturbance.

In Wells's world state, there will be universal education, world language, world-wide travel, world-wide sale and purchase and, most importantly, a world government. The utopian world government will be a vast organization which "secure[s] the maximum of convenience and administrative efficiency" (46). It is also the "sole landowner of the earth" and under it there are local governments controlling areas as large as half

England. The world state, through its subordinates, "holds all sources of energy, and ... develops these sources, and renders the energy available for the work of life" (53).[6] Naturally, it will also maintain order, roads, and a cheap and efficient administration of the justice, locomotion and public transport of the planet.

Although the utopian citizens in Wells's utopia live under a lot of government controls, their individual freedom is also greatly valued. After the discussion of a world government, Wells emphasizes that "[t]he State is for Individuals" and "the law is for freedom" (*AMU* 53). Therefore, there is a balance between the idea of a centralized authority and individualism. A utopian citizen is free to do many things. For instance, he may choose his own job; decide when to have a fortnight's holiday, or even a year of freedom to travel around the world. He may also "obtain elaborate apparatus and try curious novelties, build himself houses and make gardens, establish businesses and make experiences at large" (54). As "a man without some negotiable property is a man without freedom, and the extent of his property is very largely measure of his freedom," he is free to own those things that become extensions and expressions of one's personality: "his clothing, his jewels, the tools of his employment, his books, the objects of art he may have bought or made, his personal weapons ..., insignia, and so forth" (54-55).

Another feature of *A Modern Utopia* is the important role of science and technology, which contributes greatly to the making of the state. Wells's attitude toward science and technology has changed from skepticism to optimism, apparently. His utopia effectively envisions a

benign modernity showering its blessings on the state's citizens.[7] The debt to Bacon's *New Atlantis* for the important role of science and technology is obvious in this utopia. Scientific research, as a kind of "poietic" activity, is greatly encouraged and developed. There are a large number of laboratories attached to every level of the administration and industrial establishment. Bacon's visionary "House of Saloman" will be realized to support and reward inventors and intellectuals in the pursuit of "pure" knowledge in all the sciences (*AMU* 163). For Wells, science and technology will be used in the service of humanity and society. They will liberate humanity from disagreeable toil. Wells's utopia is thus "a world that is really abolishing the need of labour, abolishing the last base reason for anyone's servitude or inferiority" (*AMU* 60).

Wells's emphasis on the contributions of science and technology differentiates his modern utopia from traditional ones. The latter, beginning with Plato, acclaim the absence of machinery. With the partial exception of *New Atlantis*, this tradition continues up to the nineteenth century. "[I]t is only in the nineteenth century that Utopias appeared in which the fact is clearly recognised that the social fabric rests no longer upon human labour ... [but upon] the use of machinery" (*AMU* 59). The effectual emancipation of the lower working class is vividly illustrated by mechanical efficiency in the room of a utopian inn:

> The room has no corners to gather dirt, wall meets floor with a gentle curve, and the apartment could be swept out effectually by a few strokes of a mechanical sweeper. ... A cake of soap drops out of a store machine on the turn of a handle, and when

> you have done with it, you drop that and your soiled towels and so forth, which are also given to you by machines, into a little box, through the bottom of which they drop at once, and sail down a smooth shaft. ... You are politely requested to turn a handle at the foot of your bed before leaving the room, and forthwith the frame turns up into a vertical position, and the bedclothes hang airing. ... You stand at the doorway and realise that there remains not a minute's work for anyone to do. Memories of the foetid disorder of many an earthly bedroom after a night's use float across your mind. (*AMU* 61-62)

The Wellsian fascination with functionality and mechanical efficiency is revealed in these few details about the clean lines and functional design of the room at the inn where the two travellers spend their first night in utopia.

The important role of science and technology in utopia also rests on the utopian transportation vehicles and modern architecture. In addition to the invention of flying machines, Wells also foresees that trains in utopia will run smoothly and incorporate various facilities making them "as comfortable as a good club" (*AMU* 28). The advanced and comfortable transportation transcends the spatial distances that limit our potential movement on a planetary scale. Science and technology also facilitate the building of the grand super-city that resembles the one depicted in *When the Sleeper Wakes*. Utopian London is a super-city designed by artist and engineer; built with thought and dream-like materials that make structures lighter than "stone or brick can yield"

(*AMU* 144).

The class of *samurai* – an order of "voluntary nobility" – is another vital feature central to the modern utopia. The idea of a functional elite is indispensable in Wells's plan for the world state because "Wells believed that the large intricacy of utopian organization demanded more powerful and efficient methods of control than the democratic process allowed" (Hillegas 67). These *samurai*, who remind the narrator of Plato's Guardians, are actually the rulers in utopia. Not only are they the head teachers, judges, barristers, employers, medical men, legislators and government officials, but they are also the only voters (*AMU* 164). The class of *samurai* is not hereditary but open to any intelligent adult over twenty-five, who is in a reasonably healthy and efficient state. There are certain requirements, however. First, one must pass the college or upper-school graduation examination. Second, they must avoid things forbidden in the Rule, such as alcohol, drugs, smoking, betting, usury, games, trade and servants. Third, they must wear a uniform, keep themselves in good health and physical condition, renew their knowledge by reading a certain number of new books a year. Moreover, they must spend at least seven consecutive days alone in a wild and solitary place, developing their inner resources each year (*AMU* 164-176). By these means, the ruling class can remain in a good physical and mental state that will enable them to manage the state efficiently.

With these four utopian features, Wells presents us with a world in which all, or nearly all, of the age-old problems of humanity have been confronted and triumphantly solved. People live healthy and happy lives

in beautiful cities. Travel is worldwide and machines are indeed everywhere in evidence. Nonetheless, Wells's ideal scientific world state has been stereotyped as machine-worshipping. The world-state image and optimism in science and technology have been attacked by dystopias opposed to the machine and the world state in the twentieth century, such as Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four* and E. M. Forster's "The Machine Stops." In view of the massive slaughter effected by powerful weapons in the two world wars, it is hard to deny that science can be misapplied to cause dystopian effects on humanity. However, as argued by Kumar, "the remedy for misapplied science is not no science – which in any case [is] an impossibility – but better science, better applied." Indeed, what Wells's utopia reveals is not scientism, the worship of science, but "an optimistic assessment of the possibility of science and technology." Wells looked forwards, not backwards. Therefore, he refused to share in the growing fear, especially strong among the literary intelligentsia, of the tremendous power of science and technology. (Introduction xli-xlii).

Apart from its content, *A Modern Utopia* qualifies as a proper utopia by having the function of a social critique. In contrast to the beautiful world of utopia, Wells depicts the world the two travellers come from as an inferior world of disorder, absurdity and nightmare. While the people in utopia live happy and healthy lives, those in the travellers' world live in misery. The narrator reveals to the utopian inn-keeper that in his world,

> [m]en die of starvation; people die by the hundred thousand

> needlessly and painfully; men and women are lashed together to make hell for each other; children are born – abominably, and reared in cruelty and folly; there is a thing called war, a horror of blood and vileness. The whole thing seems to me at times a cruel and wasteful wilderness of muddle. (*AMU* 77)

Wells's discontent with present society is also effectively elucidated in the "monstrous imagery" of the last pages of *A Modern Utopia*.[8] After the gorgeous picture of utopia is almost completed, we are thrown back to London in the imperfect world of Earth without jerk, sound or hint of material shock. In deepest despair, the narrator trudges around London, beset by tramps and whores, struck afresh by the poverty, dirt, noise and confusion around him. He notices a newly spread newspaper placard displaying examples of human violence and idiocy: "Massacre in Odessa; ... Shocking Lynching Outrage in New York State; ... German Intrigues Get a Set-back." So the narrator exclaims, "Dear old familiar world!" (214). By a series of similar contrasts in *A Modern Utopia*, Wells underlines the criticism and discontent of the present society.

The "monstrous imagery" of the present society unveils Wells's ambivalence in his future visions. *A Modern Utopia* is a proper utopia according to its form, content and functions, yet its criticism and discontent with society reveal its dystopian contexts. In the early 1900s, the Europe was full of social unrest and political turmoil before the First World War. Wells was working on his utopia during this period and he was well aware of the threat of the war and the possible disasters after it. Indeed, *A Modern Utopia* is more an expression of Wells's desire for a

better world than a prediction of a future society. When Wells later comments on this novel, he says, "[In *A Modern Utopia*] I presented not so much my expectations for mankind as my desires" (*Autobiography* 554). Wells is writing a fable of a better world. *A Modern Utopia* presents an expression of Wells's desires for a better humanity, a more efficient government and a more rightful application of science and technology, which in turn will make the world utopia.

We have asserted that *A Modern Utopia* is a proper utopia on the basis of an analysis of its form, content and functions with respect to literary definitions of utopia. Wells's transition from dystopianism to utopianism can be deduced logically then. Indeed, Wells's later writings after the year 1899 were mostly utopian. By that year, when Wells finished *When the Sleeper Wakes*, he had overcome a great deal in his life: a poor childhood, the traumas of a parental marriage failure, illness and personal anxieties about his career. With the good education he had received, he was now ready to pay attention fully to literary work that rewarded him greatly in terms of money, fame and social status. Wells not only wrote a utopia, he lived one. His personal life progressed from desperation to success and fame. His every word and action, personal, political and literary, seems part of a consistent explanation for his shift from dystopianism to utopianism. Yet he was writing against the historical grain, his optimism counters the pessimistic visions of other modernist writers.

Wells's positive attitudes revealed in his later utopias owe something to his personal success as a writer. After the publication of *The Time*

Machine in 1895, Wells became a popular writer whose books often sold well. By 1896, he was earning more than £1, 000 a year (Smith 30). He was much in demand after the success of his early books, and his price rose accordingly. With his ascending fame and literary output, Wells's income rose fairly steadily: "In 1901 his scales with Pinker[9] amounted to over £2,000; in 1903, £2,300; in 1904, over £3,100" (Smith 141). In the first decade of the twentieth century, Wells had a grand house built at Sandgate, and this geographical move signified a step upward socially and psychologically. He was comfortably settled in this new home. His second marriage with Jane Wells[10] was successful and about to be crowned with a first child. At the end of nineteenth century Wells still suffered from his poor health characterized by spitting blood and his kidney problem. Nevertheless, his drive to succeed had allowed him to ignore his illness. Moreover, his wife took good care of him. The move to sea air had also alleviated his medical problems. In this comfortable environment, together with the freedom which his new house and money gave him, Wells devoted his life generally to working out his world view in the utopian novels (Smith 90).

By 1905, Wells had become an internationally famous writer. His popularity started with *The Time Machine* while his worldwide fame began with the publication of *Anticipations* (1901) which "catapulted Wellsian thought into the drawing-rooms, railway cars, and clubrooms of the middle and upper classes" (Smith 92). The social importance of Wells also rose drastically with the publication of his early utopian works like *Anticipations*, *Mankind in the Making*, *A Modern Utopia* and *New*

Worlds for Old. Wells had become a great man who everyone wanted to meet and talk with. He was invited to read their manuscripts and listen to their ideas due to his fame and intellectual authority. To reflect his important status, his name had been transformed to H.G., he would from this time forward always be known by those initials. His Spade House at Sandgate "became a mecca for visitors interested in him as a literary figure" and those "who regarded him as a new socialist leader" (Smith 97-98). He became a member of the National Liberal Club, proposed by Henry James, and often dined at The Other Club.[11] In addition to attending fashionable dinner parties, Wells was often invited to speak to and to meet important personages. In 1906, Wells had a triumph in the United States when he visited the White House and met Theodore Roosevelt there. His fame and literary success provided a solid background for his optimistic vision in *A Modern Utopia*.

Another factor shaping the features in *A Modern Utopia* is Wells's socialist belief. Among the dinner parties Wells attended in the early 1900s, there was one given by the Webbs to woo him to join the Fabian Society. Led by the Webbs and Bernard Shaw, the Fabian Society was "a political and economics study and pressure group founded in the late 1880s" (Smith 90). Wells's meeting with the Fabians confirmed his position in socialism. As noted by Smith, Wells was a socialist long before he joined the Fabian Society:

> He had worn his red tie, attended meetings of socialist groups, and vaguely felt himself part of the coming new order of things ever since his student days. In 1886 he read a paper before the

> Talkers Club at the Royal College on the subject of socialism, a paper which he later described as theological in method, deducing the need for socialism from self-proclaimed dogmas. (91)

In that debate, Wells argued that "[t]he Cornerstone of Socialism is the great principle of the merging of the individual in the State" (Smith 513). In his *First and Last Things* (1908), Wells writes, "Socialism for me is a common step we are all taking in the great synthesis of human purpose. ... We look towards the day, the day of the organized civilized world state" (Quoted in Smith 89). For this understanding of socialism, Wells created a world state in his utopia.

Wells's socialism does not seem very Marxist, belonging rather to the wider socialist tradition. Wells himself notes that "my socialism is pre-Marxian" and influenced by utopists such as Plato and More, as well as by the most influential utopian socialists of the nineteenth century, such as Robert Owen, Henry George and Bellamy. When he encountered Marxism, he was very critical of its doctrine of class war, which he found essentially destructive and uncreative at a time when the great task facing humanity was "reconstruction" (*Autobiography* 142-143).[12] Accordingly, the polity in utopia is reconstructed by a planned world government and humanity is gradually getting rid of the Dull, the Base and the failures.

The socialism Wells adopted in *A Modern Utopia* is greatly shaped by Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis*, which was not simply "the greatest of scientific utopias" but the most important for modern utopians. Bacon had been a true prophet of the socialist state for he recognized the

fundamental, intrinsic connection between science and socialism. In Wells's own words, "the Utopia of Francis Bacon is a world of seekers after knowledge, a world growing perpetually in knowledge and wisdom and incidentally growing in power. It is a world ruled by organized Science." It supplements the utopia of Plato by trying out "the idea of making not the philosopher, but scientific philosophy, king" (Philmus 120). Therefore, for Wells, utopia can be actualized by the marriage of socialism and science, producing a planned, organized world state in which science and technology are greatly developed and encouraged.

Socialism is elaborated by Wells in his discussion of the utopian economics of *A Modern Utopia*. The world state in utopia is of course, in the broadest sense of the term, socialist. This follows logically in the sense that Wells's world state makes sure every citizen lives in good conditions. Moreover, that state also provides employment to the unemployed, nurses and houses those who are sick, incapacitated, or old. Wells's socialist belief is confirmed in utopian economics:

> [E]conomics in Utopia must be ... not a theory of trading based on bad psychology, but physics applied to problems in the theory of sociology. The general problem of Utopian economics is to state the conditions of the most efficient application of the steadily increasing quantities of material energy the progress of science makes available for human service, to the general needs of mankind. (*AMU* 48)

Thus, Wells's utopia adopts a socialist economic system rather than a capitalist one, which is based on the bad psychology of human greed.

The shape of *A Modern Utopia* also rests largely on Wells's belief in literature as a means of education. In both Wells's real life and his literary utopia, education has been the sole and most important means to achieve social betterment. As pointed out by W. Warren Wagar in his "Science and the World State: Education as Utopia in the Prophetic Vision of H. G. Wells," Wells's utopia is constructed mainly by a "program of research, education, and propaganda" that will transform humanity and society for the better (42). For Wells, humanity "would be *taught* to live as one worldwide community" and "education was both a means to the end and the end itself: both revolution and utopia" (42-43). As education had changed his world and saved him from a life of financial drudgery, Wells concluded that education, applied on a global scale, could change humanity. Wells began his career as a teacher and he never stopped being one even when he devoted all his life to literary writing.[13] His role as a teacher continued to manifest itself in most of his writing, especially his utopian works.

A Modern Utopia effectively demonstrates Wells's enthusiasm for education as the means toward utopia. When Wells wrote this novel in the early 1900s, his attitude towards the meaning and purpose of literary writing had changed. He emphasized more and more the educative role of literature over its artistic form. Summing up Wells's later treatment of this change of attitude in *Experiment in Autobiography*, Jack Williamson notes that Wells was "caught, early in his career, in a conflict between 'the civil service conception of a life framed in devotion to public ends'

and the 'artistic attitude'" (35). As revealed in *A Modern Utopia* and his later works, Wells resolved this conflict by adopting the "devotion for public ends" rather than an "artistic attitude."[14]

Wells's utopia in *A Modern Utopia* seems a model for the society to follow. Wells aims to educate his readers with his utopian ideas of science, education and socialism. In Harris-Fain's words, "Wells takes a sort of pride not only in the success of the novel but in its influence on the lives of its readers – an influence he later sought to exercise more and more through his work" (90). In addition, most of the comments on the novel focus on its ideas rather than its literary execution. For example, Henry James was impressed by the quality of mind displayed in this novel while Joseph Conrad praised the book for its "intellectual kindliness" in extending a hand to civilization. William James praised Wells for he had "given a shove to the practical thought of the next generation" that would be among its greatest influences (Hillegas 64). As Wells's own commentary and other critics' responses on *A Modern Utopia* have shown, Wells wrote his utopian works with a mission, a rhetorical role to providing models and promises for humanity's future. In contrast to the modernist aesthetic of "art for art's sake," Wells considers literature an important means for education and he aims to present his ideas in order to educate and influence readers.

Although Wells wrote a number of significant dystopias in his early literary career, he later produced the most vivid and original pictures of utopia and the scientific world state. *A Modern Utopia* is perhaps the

most important utopia Wells wrote. By discussing its form, content and functions with respect to the definitions of utopia, I have shown that *A Modern Utopia* fits fairly well into the definition formulated in Chapter One. Furthermore, I have argued that there is nevertheless an ambivalence in Wells's future visions behind his transition from dystopianism to utopianism. Finally, I have also concluded that this unconventional transition occurs mainly due to his personal progress, his socialist belief and his perception of writing as a means of education and propaganda. Indeed, Wells's role as a public educator continued as he proceeded to write more and more utopian works that even included textbooks for the world, such as *The Outline of History* (1920) and *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933). This phenomenon reinforces our conclusion that he considered literary writing as a means of education and human enlightenment.

Conclusion

The nineteenth century has been described as the most utopian century of our epoch because of the increasing influence of the modern belief in science and progress, as well as the impact of Darwin's theory of evolution, which relates to the ideas about a higher order of life. In the last decade of this most utopian period, Wells unconventionally produced a series of important dystopias in literary science fiction that initiated and shaped the dystopias of other writers in the twentieth century. The dystopias of *The Time Machine* (1895) and *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899) effectively illustrate Wells's skepticism and ambivalence toward the belief in science and progress. The skepticism and ambivalence revealed in his early dystopias demonstrated a sense of the "postmodern," as explained by Italian philosopher Gianni Vattimo in *The End of Modernity* and other works.

According to Vattimo, the term "modernity" refers not to "modernism" in arts, but to the period stretching roughly from Descartes to the present day, characterized by the notions of progress and science, as well as the secularization and demythization of the sacred. Modernity is the era of faith in God being gradually replaced by the belief in progress and science. In the secularization and demythization of the sacred, the religious and mythic world view is gradually abandoned for the scientific one. Since utopias often present their faith in progress, and are concerned with the realization of an optimal reality by way of scientific design, whether it be oriented metaphysically (as in

Campanella's *La Città del Sole*) or technologically (as in Bacon's *New Altantis* and Wells's *A Modern Utopia*), there is a close relationship between utopia and modernity (Vattimo, *Transparent Society* 78-79).

As utopia reveals its close connection with modernity, which is characterized by its belief in science and progress, the appearance of the dystopian tradition in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries effectively suggests "the end of modernity," to borrow from the book title of Vattimo, or simply "post-modernity." In *The Transparent Society*, Vattimo argues that the dystopian characteristics of the twentieth century are not simply caused by certain negative experiences that have led us to realize the disastrous and catastrophic consequences of the misapplication of science and technology. The major foundation for the emergence of dystopia in the century is "the discovery that the rationalization of the world turns against reason and its ends of perfection and emancipation." (78) Vattimo calls this discovery the "*counter-finality of reason*," while Horkheimer and Adorno call it the "*Dialectic of Enlightenment.*" With its "anti-utopian" tradition and its deep skepticism toward the idea of science and progress, dystopia marks the dissolution of the ideology of progress that "no longer makes any sense as a dogma of the philosophy of history because it is precisely history as *unilinear* that is no longer intelligible" (81). Consequently, the appearance of dystopia signifies the end of modernity since, according Vattimo's concept of "post-modernity," when it no longer seems possible to regard history as unilinear, modernity ends (2).

Wells's dystopias in the last decade of the nineteenth century also

challenge and question the tradition of utopia and modernity. In *The Time Machine*, Wells reveals his doubts about the promise of the perfection and emancipation of humanity by the progress of science and technology. He demonstrates in this dystopia that even if a perfect world could be realized, such perfection would erode the energy, strength and intelligence of humanity. In the perfected environment made by the progress of science, the inhabitants of the future world degenerate to the docile and fragile Eloi who become "cattle" of the predatory Morlocks. In *When the Sleeper Wakes*, Wells likewise elucidates his skepticism towards the emancipation of humanity through the advancement of science. In this particular dystopia, science and technology are controlled and manipulated by selfish politicians and capitalists, which consequently causes great misery to the proletariat who become servants and attendants of the machine. The working-class ceases to toil and their bodies become pale and disfigured. They suffer rather than benefit from the advancement of science and technology. The fact that Wells adopts the genre of dystopia to present his future visions, together with the deep skepticism toward science revealed in his dystopias, demonstrates that he has arrived at a sense of the "postmodern" in his early writing.

In the twentieth century literature, we can observe a radical transformation from utopia to dystopia. After the turn of the nineteenth century, literature becomes more and more dystopian. Apart from the negative experiences, the disasters of the two world wars, fascism and totalitarianism, in the twentieth century, the transformation from utopia to dystopia in literature is mainly due to the realization of the mythic

nature of the modern belief in science and progress. However, in this pessimistic century, Wells's fiction extraordinarily shifts from dystopia to utopia. In *A Modern Utopia*, he presents apparently a scientific world state acclaiming the modern belief in science and progress. Is Wells moving backward in his thinking? When we read this work more carefully, we can find another insight, though. Wells's ambivalence and skepticism toward the advancement of science and technology never disappear in his utopian novels. For his persistent ambivalence and skepticism toward the belief in science and progress, we can plausibly argue that Wells has arrived at a sense of the "postmodern" in both the dystopias and utopias that we have discussed.

In addition to the recognition of the impossibility of regarding history as unilinear, Vattimo also defines "post-modernity" as a "peculiar 'critical' relationship with Western thought" that dissolves the tradition of modernity and prolongs it by continuing to depend upon its philosophical system of thought and language (*End of Modernity* 3). Vattimo then locates the emergence of post-modernity in the final quarter of the nineteenth century, when Nietzsche revealed that the process of demythization, in which science and modernity have engaged, is itself a myth. Vattimo calls this recognition of the mythic elements in the belief in science and progress the "postmodern." In his "Myth and the Fate of Secularization," Vattimo explains that "the moment of the demythization of demythization can be considered the true and proper moment of transition from the modern to the postmodern" (35).

We find this recognition of the "mythic elements" within science's

claims to reason and truth in Wells's dystopian and utopian works, which demonstrates certain postmodern sentiments. The persistent ambivalence and skepticism toward the belief in science and progress in his dystopias and utopias reveals effectively his awareness of the possible "errors" in the modern belief. Although Wells's later novels turn from dystopia to utopia, the ambivalence and skepticism never vanish in his novels. In *A Modern Utopia*, Wells's ambivalence and skepticism have receded to the background in his later works. They are revealed by the negative images of the narrator's dystopian world. After the adventures in utopia, the narrator is thrown back to London. In deepest despair, he treads around the imperfect city of poverty, dirt, noise and confusion, and notices a newspaper placard exhibiting examples of human violence and idiocy. Moreover, in *Experiment in Autobiography*, Wells reflects that he has expressed in this utopia his "desires" for a possible better world rather than his intellectual convictions of what he believes will actually occur in the future (554). This reflection shows that Wells, the teacher, is writing a fable for the world in *A Modern Utopia*, which further illustrates his recognition of the mythic nature of the belief in science and progress. Indeed, *A Modern Utopia* is itself a myth because Wells, taking the role of public educator, mainly provides models and optimistic projections of humanity's future in this utopia.

In this thesis, I have argued that there is a persistent ambivalence and skepticism in Wells's future visions concealed within his apparent transition from dystopia to utopia. Wells's most prominent works, namely *The Time Machine*, *When the Sleeper Wakes* and *A Modern*

Utopia, have been discussed with respect to his biographical background, and the intellectual movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The transformation from dystopia to utopia, as well as the persistent ambivalence in his future visions are largely caused by the crises in his personal life, his socialist belief and his sense of the educational role of literature. With reference to Vattimo's concepts of modernity and post-modernity, we have also considered interesting juxtapositions of modern and post-modern sentiments in Wells's fiction. Concerning his skepticism and his awareness of the mythic nature in the modern belief in science and progress, we can plausibly argue that Wells does arrive at a sense of the "postmodern." For further research on Wells, we may work on the mythic elements in his novels in order to elaborate the relationship between his writing and the context of post-modernity in which the modernist demythization is unmasked as myth.

Notes

Chapter One

[1] This is Wells's famous phrase to describe the First World War.

Chapter Two

[1] As reflected in Wells's *A Modern Utopia* and *The Shape of Things to Come*, the Wellsian world-state is often run by an elite of scientists and engineers for the good of the people. The application of science would almost automatically bring this heaven to his world-state, which is inhabited by a finer race of human beings, who have inevitably evolved to their state of near perfection.

[2] Stead was one of Wells's earliest admirers. He made that comment when he discussed *The Invisible Man* and "The Star" in his article "The Latest Apocalypse of the End of the World," (1898) in *Review of Reviews*.

[3] For details of these dystopias, please refer to my discussion of dystopian works in Chapter One.

[4] See Hillegas's *The Future as Nightmare* 26.

[5] In his "Possibilities of Space and Time: *The Time Machine*," Patrick Parrinder suggests that the figure 802,702 is "a suitably entropic and cyclical 'running down' number" (41). If we assume that Wells had projected the invention of the Time Machine to the year 1901, we can deduce that the world of Eloi and Morlocks is located 800,800 years after 1901. 800,800 is a significantly bifurcated number according to

Parrinder: "The 800 years, enough to allow for the rise and fall of a civilisation or two in historical time, take us to 2701. To this figure Wells added a further 800,000 (that is, the best part of a million years) of evolutionary time" (42). Then, we can see that the figure 802,701 is determined by both the evolutionary and historiographic timescales.

[6] "Eloi" and "Morlocks" may mean angels and devils. As pointed out by Lawton, the origin of name Morlocks is possibly in the biblical "Moloch" while that of Eloi is in the Hebrew text of Christ's questioning of God from the cross—"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" (xlvii)

[7] Wells had studied science – mainly Biology, Physics and Geology – at the Normal School of Science on a scholarship, which was to train him as a teacher.

[8] Evolution is a theory in biology postulating that the various types of animals and plants have their origin in other preexisting types and that the distinguishable differences are due to modifications in successive generations. The theory of evolution is one of the fundamental keystones of modern biological theory. The theory is first proved by Charles Darwin, with the idea of Natural Selection in his *The Origin of Species* published in 1859.

[9] In 1852, Sir William Thompson (Lord Kelvin) formulated the second law of thermodynamics, also known as the theory of entropy, according to which the sum of useful energy throughout the universe would be constantly reduced by the diffusion of heat until all had reached a state of entropy. Therefore, he concluded that the earth would become unfit for the habitation of humanity within a finite period.

[10] T. H. Huxley is nicknamed "Darwin's Bulldog." For details, see Lawton's Introduction to *The Time Machine* xlv.

[11] *Fin de siècle* means "the end of century" literally. The use of this French term here refers to the characteristic of the close of the nineteenth century and especially its literary and artistic climate of sophistication, world-weariness, and fashionable despair.

[12] When Wells was fourteen, his mother worked as a housekeeper at Up Park, the country estate where she had worked as a maid before marriage (my note).

Chapter Three

[1] The text of *When the Sleeper Wakes* I have chosen is that of the first published book edition of 1899. This novel was revised and reissued under the title *The Sleeper Awakes* in 1910. I choose the 1899 version for the following reasons. The first publication of the story was in the magazine *The Graphic* over the winter of 1898-9. Later in 1899 the first book version appeared as a substantial revision of the serial which is, as pointed out by Lawton, "a neater, shorter work, with less of the romantic involvement with Helen and a much tighter ending" (Note on the Text xlvi). The 1910 edition, on the other hand, seems motivated by publishing obligations and by the desire to tinker.

[2] This device can also be found in other stories as well, like "Rip Van Winkle" of Washington Irving. "Rip Van Winkle," an Americanized version of German folktale, is one of the first American short stories. The main character in this story is a henpecked husband who sleeps for

twenty years and awakes as an old man to find his wife dead, his daughter happily married, and America now an independent country.

[3] *When the Sleeper Wakes* is abbreviated to *WSW* within parentheses in this thesis.

[4] In the conversation between the old man who knows everything and Graham, we are told that Ostrog organizes this rebellion and arranges for the waking of the Sleeper just because he is not elected to the Council. He means to become master by all means and so many people are dying in the war and fighting for his selfish ambition.

[5] In Chapter 19, when Ostrog argue with Graham about the fate of the great mass of poor men, Ostrog reveals his Over-man theory of humanity and voices a Nietszchean doctrine:

> That some day the Over-man may come, that some day the inferior, the weak and the bestial may be subdued or eliminated. Subdued if not eliminated. The world is no place for the bad, the stupid, the enervated. Their duty – it's a fine duty too! – is to die. The death of the failure! That is the path by which the beast rose to manhood, by which man goes on to higher things. (166-167)

Although Ostrog is portrayed as a evil figure, he somehow embodies Wellsian idea of the necessity of elite leadership which Wells acclaims in the later utopian works.

[6] For the discussion of the nineteenth-century attitudes towards the machine, please see Sussman's *Victorians and the Machine*. Sussman presents various prominent Victorian writers' attitude toward the

machine. He finds that most Victorian writers demonstrate their fear of the machine in their literary works.

[7] Please see Lawton's introduction to *When the Sleeper Wakes* xliii and Hillegas's *The Future as Nightmare* 48 for the discussion of these two works.

[8] In *When the Sleeper Wakes*, there are Pleasure Cities of "[s]trange places reminiscent of the legendary Sybaris, cities of art and beauty, mercenary art and mercenary beauty, sterile wonderful cities of motion and music, whither repaired all who profited by the fierce, inglorious, economic struggle that went on in the glaring labyrinth below" (119). There are also Euthanasy, the easy death, and psychic surgery, performed by hypnosis, to forget the unpleasant in Wells's story.

[9] In *Brave New World*, sex and soma are necessary features of its mechanical paradise:

> ... there is always *soma*, delicious *soma*, half a gramme for a half-holiday, a gramme for a week-end, two grammes for a trip to the gorgeous East, three for a dark eternity on the moon; returning whence they find themselves on the other side of the crevice, safe on the solid ground of daily labour and distraction, scampering from feely to feely, from girl to pneumatic girl, from Electromagnetic Golf course to .... (67)

[10] In *When the Sleeper Wakes*, babies are nursed in a system of *crèches* which have "almost entirely replaced the hazardous adventures of the old-world nursing." In these crèches, there are "wet nurses, a vista of mechanical figures, with arms, shoulders and breasts of astonishing

realistic modelling, articulation, and texture, but mere brass tripods below, and having in the place of features a flat disc" (179).

[11] As Norman Mackenzie and Jeanne Mackenzie state in their biography, *When the Sleeper Wakes* is an ambiguous dystopia on the ground that "Wells seems unsure whether to approve or disapprove of his projection, whether he is writing a utopia or an anti-utopia." (151)

[12] This scene has been quoted in page 59.

Chapter Four

[1] *A Modern Utopia* is abbreviated *AMU* within parentheses in this thesis.

[2] The women have a chapter to themselves in *A Modern Utopia*, reflecting Wells's awakened interest in the feminist cause. By regarding motherhood as a service to the state, Wells "combines economic equality with sexism" (Hughes 65). Since then, women will not be at a disadvantage because of "her incapacity for great stresses of exertion, her frequent liability to slight illnesses, her weaker initiative, her inferior invention and resourcefulness, her relative incapacity for organisation and combination, and the possibilities of emotional complications whenever she is in economic dependence on men" (*AMU* 111). Wells rightly points out the importance of motherhood and gender equality though he still adopts the gender stereotype that presupposes men as professionals in the society while women are confined to take up the role of a mother.

[3] The name *Samurai* refers to the warrior class of medieval Japan,

somewhat similar to the knightly class of medieval Europe. The *Samurai* of Utopia will be discussed later in this chapter.

[4] The "House of Saloman," which refers to the vast scientific research institute, is directly borrowed from Bacon's *New Atlantis*. Its motto, in both *New Atlantis* and *A Modern Utopia* is: "The End of our Foundation is the knowledge of Causes, and secret motions of things; and the enlarging of the bounds of Human Empire, to the effecting of all things possible" (Kumar, Notes 241-242).

[5] Wells also tried to realize his idea of a world state in real life. During the First World War, he actively advocated and established the League of Nations Society and later the United Nations in the Second World War.

[6] Energy is the standard of monetary value used in the modern Utopia (my note).

[7] "New" and "Modern" were indeed the keywords of the late Victorian and Edwardian age, in which Wells grew to early manhood. As put by Kumar, "[t]he cult of modernity, with a new emphasis on the word 'modern' as the desired progressive quality of novelty in art, politics or morals, dates from this time. 'Transition', 'renovation' and 'reconstruction' were all terms commonly met with" (169).

[8] This ending is strongly reminiscent of Julian West's "nightmare" return to Boston at the end of Bellamy's *Looking Backward*.

[9] J. B. Pinker was Wells's chief agent at the time.

[10] Jane Wells was Wells's former student who was called Amy Catherine Robbins. In January 1894 Wells left Isabel to be with

Catherine and they finally got married in 1895. Thereafter, Wells called her Jane.

[11] The Other Club was founded by Winston Churchill in an effort to free himself and his friends, from fashionable society at Pratt's and White's.

[12] Wells's response to Marxism is even harsh. He notes in *Experiment in Autobiography* that

> Marxism is in no sense creative or curative. Its relation to the inevitable reconstruction of human society which is now in progress, is parasitic. It is an enfeebling mental epidemic of spite which mankind has encountered in its difficult and intricate struggle out of outworn social conditions towards a new world order. (143)

[13] Wells had been working as a tutor in various school before his education in Normal Science School that meant to train him as a teacher.

[14] Wells's denunciation of the artistic attitude has been studied by Darren Harris-Fain in his dissertation *H. G. Wells and Modernist Revolution*. For Harris-Fain, Wells "fell out of favor with the Modernist camp" because he denounced the Modernist aesthetic of "art for art's sake" (1).

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